



HISTORY

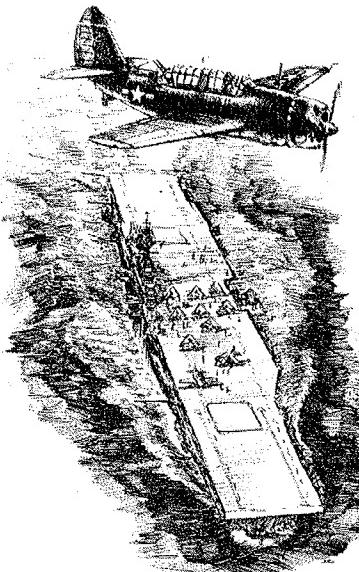
OF THE

USS BUNKER HILL-CV17

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PART I—CHRONOLOGY

U.S.S. BUNKER HILL

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Date of launching: 7 December 1942.

Place of launching: Fore River Yard, Quincy, Massachusetts.

Builder: Bethlehem Steel Company.

Sponsor: Mrs. Donald S. Boynton, Highland Park, Ill.

Commissioned: 25 May 1943

Place of Commissioning: South Boston Navy Yard, Boston, Mass.

BUNKER HILL COMMANDING OFFICERS

BALLENTINE, John J., Capt.	Hillsboro, Ohio.	25 May 43 to 5 Feb 44
JETER, Thomas P., Capt.	Coronado, Cal.	5 Feb 44 to 21 Aug 44
GREER, Marshall R., Capt.	Virginia Beach, Va.	21 Aug 44 to 24 Jan 45
SEITZ, George A., Capt.	Rochester, N.Y.	24 Jan 45 to 18 Aug 45
MEADOW, Harold L., Capt.	Atlanta, Ga.	18 Aug 45

FLAG OFFICERS EMBARKED ON BUNKER HILL

SHERMAN, F. C., Rear Admiral	CTG 58.3	26 Nov. 43 to 5 Mar. 44
MONTGOMERY, A. E., Rear Admiral	CTG 58.2	15 Mar. 44 to 12 Aug. 44
BOGAN, G. F., Rear Admiral	CTG 58.2	15 Aug. 44 to 1 Oct. 44
MITSCHER, M. A., Vice Admiral	CTF 58	7 Feb. 45 to 11 May 45

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TASK UNITS JOINED BY BUNKER HILL

16 Sept. 43 to 28 May 45

16 Sept. 43 Reported to CincPac at Cristobal, C.Z.
21 Oct. 43 Joined T.G. 53.3
5 Nov. 43 Joined T.G. 50.3
26 Nov. 43 Joined T.G. 50.4
6 Dec. 43 Joined T.G. 58.8
22 Dec. 43 Joined T.G. 37.2
23 Jan. 44 Joined T.G. 58.5
25 Jan. 44 Joined T.G. 58.3
15 Mar. 44 Joined T.G. 58.2
14 July 44 Joined T.G. 58.3
25 Aug. 44 Joined T.G. 58.2
31 Aug. 44 Joined T.G. 38.2
6 Nov. 44 Joined T.G. 30.4
7 Nov. 44 Joined T.G. 38.4
20 Nov. 44 Joined T.G. 30.9
1 Dec. 44 Operating Independently
29 Jan. 45 Joined T.G. 12.2
9 Feb. 45 Joined T.G. 58.3
11 May 45 Joined T.U. 58.3.5
13 May 45 Joined T.U. 50.18.80
17 May 45 Operating Independently
28 May 45 Joined T.U. 19.12.1
4 June 45 Detached from T.U. 19.12.1

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PHYSICAL MOVEMENTS

25 May 1943 - 3 Oct. 1945

1943
25 May

5 June

6 June

25 June

27 June

28 June

28 June to

2 July

2 July

5 July to

12 July

12 July

15 July

20 July

21 July

22 July to

5 August

6 August

10 August

11 August

12 August

4 September

5 September

6 September

8 September

9 September

10 September

16 September

17 September

18 September

26 September

28 September

2 October

6 October to

9 October

9 October

17 October to

19 October

19 October

21 October

Commissioned at South Boston Navy Yard, Drydock #3, Boston, Mass.

Left drydock and moored to south jetty of South Boston Navy Yard.

Moored to west jetty, South Boston Navy Yard. Underway for Hampton Roads, Va.

Anchored Berth #25, Hampton Roads, Va. Underway Chesapeake Bay. 1137 First aircraft (1 F4U) landed aboard. 1334 Launched first aircraft. Maneuvering in Chesapeake Bay.

Moored to Pier #5, N.O.B., Norfolk, Va. Underway, maneuvering in Chesapeake Bay.

Moored to Pier #5, N.O.B., Norfolk, Va. Underway for Trinidad, B.W.I. Anchored Port of Spain Harbor, Trinidad, B.W.I. Maneuvering in Gulf of Paria. Maneuvering in Gulf of Paria.

Underway for Norfolk, Va. Moored Pier #5, N.O.B., Norfolk, Va. Underway for Boston Navy Yard, Mass. Moored West Jetty, South Boston Navy Yard. Underway tests at sea.

Moored Lamberts Point Deperming Slip, Norfolk, Va. Moored Pier #7, N.O.B., Norfolk, Va. Underway to anchor in Chesapeake Bay. Moored Pier #7, N.O.B., Norfolk, Va. Underway for Panama Canal. Moored Pier #8, Cristobal, C.Z. Reported for duty to CinCPac.

Underway for transit of Panama Canal. Moored Dock #16, Balboa, C.Z.

Underway to San Diego, Calif. Moored Main Dock, N.A.S., San Diego, Calif. Underway for Pearl Harbor, T.H. Moored Berth #22, N.O.B., P.H., T.H. Underway for maneuvers off Hawaii.

Moored Berth B228, Ford Island, N.O.B., P.H., T.H. Underway for maneuvers off Hawaii.

Moored to Dock B24, N.O.B., P.H., T.H. Underway as unit of T.G. 53.3 to Espiritu Santo.

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5 November
7 November
8 November
9 November
13 November
14 November
12 December
22 December

Anchored Espiritu Santo.
Underway for maneuvers.
Anchored, Espiritu Santo.
Underway for Rabaul, New Britian.
Anchored Espiritu Santo.
Underway for Gilbert Islands.
Moored to Buoy, Espiritu Santo.
Underway for Kavieng, New Ireland.

1944
7 January
19 January
20 January
23 January
4 February
12 February
26 February
28 February
4 March
6 March
9 March
15 March
20 March
22 March
6 April
13 April

Moored to Buoy, Espiritu Santo.
Underway for Funafuti, Ellice Island.
Anchored Funafuti Anchorage, Ellice Island.
Underway for Marshall Islands.
Anchored Majuro Lagoon, Marshall Islands.
Underway for Caroline Islands.
Anchored Majuro Lagoon, Marshall Islands.
Underway to P.H., T.H.
Moored to Berth F-2-3-S, N.O.B., P.H., T.H.
Entered Drydock No. 1, Navy Yard, P.H., T.H.
Moored to Dock B22, N.Q.B., P.H., T.H.
Underway for Marshall Islands.
Anchored in Majuro Lagoon, Marshall Islands.
Underway for Palau Islands.
Anchored Majuro Lagoon, Marshall Islands.
Underway for Hollandia, New Guinea, and Truk, Caroline Islands.

4 May
21 May
23 May
6 June
27 June
7 July
7 July
14 July
31 July
1 August
9 August
25 August
26 August
29 August
28 September
29 September
1 October
3 October
4 October
5 October
5 October

Anchored Majuro Lagoon, Marshall Islands.
Underway for maneuvers.
Anchored Majuro Lagoon, Marshall Islands.
Underway for Mariana Islands.
Anchored Eniwetok Lagoon, Marshall Islands.
Underway for maneuvers off Eniwetok.
Anchored Eniwetok Lagoon, Marshall Islands.
Underway for Mariana Islands, Palau Islands, Volcano Islands, and Bonin Islands.
Anchored Garapan Anchorage, Saipan, Mariana Islands.
Underway for Volcano and Bonin Islands.
Anchored Eniwetok Lagoon, Marshall Islands.
Underway for exercises off Eniwetok.
Anchored Eniwetok Lagoon, Marshall Islands.
Underway for Palau Islands and Mindanao, Leyte, Cebu, Luzon, Negros, P.I.
Anchored Saipan Roads, Mariana Islands.
Underway for Ulithi Atoll.
Anchored Ulithi Atoll.
Underway.
Anchored Ulithi Atoll.
Underway for maneuvers.
Anchored Ulithi Atoll.

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7 October
27 October
1 November
4 November
5 November
17 November
20 November
29 November
1 December
6 December
7 December

Underway for Okinawa, Formosa, Phillipine Islands.
Anchored Seeadler Harbor, Manus Island.
Underway for Saipan.
Anchored Saipan Harbor, Marianas.
Underway for Phillipines.
Anchored Ulithi.
Underway for Pearl Harbor.
Moored Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, T.H.
Underway for P.S.N.Y., Bremerton, Wash.
Anchored Bremerton, Wash.
Entered Dry Dock Four (4), P.S.N.Y., Bremerton,
Wash.

1945
8 January
16 January
19 January

20 January
21 January
23 January
24 January
28 January
29 January
7 February
10 February
4 March
14 March
14 May
17 May
25 May
28 May
3 June
4 June
22 July
27 September
30 September
3 October

Moored to Pier 6C, P.S.N.Y., Bremerton, Wash.
Anchored off Orchard Point, Puget Sound.
Underway trials. Moored Pier 5, P.S.N.Y., Bremer-
ton, Wash.
Anchored Sinclair Inlet, Puget Sound.
Underway for Alameda.
Moored N.A.S., Alameda, Calif.
Underway for Pearl Harbor.
Moored Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, T.H.
Underway for Ulithi.
Anchored Ulithi Atoll.
Underway for Tokyo, Iwo Jima and Okinawa.
Anchored Ulithi Atoll.
Underway for Kyushu and Okinawa.
Anchored in Ulithi Atoll.
Underway for Pearl Harbor.
Moored Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, T.H.
Underway for P.S.N.Y., Bremerton, Wash.
Anchored Sinclair Inlet, Puget Sound.
Entered Dry Dock No. 5, P.S.N.Y., Bremerton, Wash.
Moored Pier 3, P.S.N.Y., Bremerton, Wash.
Underway for Alameda, Calif.
Moored N.A.S., Alameda, Calif.
Underway for Pearl Harbor.

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U.S.S. BUNKER HILL

Actions in Which Engaged

1943

11 Nov.	Strikes	Rabaul, New Britain
18-25 Nov.	Strikes & Land Support	Tarawa, Gilbert Islands
8 Dec.	Strikes	Nauru, Gilbert Islands
25 Dec.	Strikes	Kavieng, New Ireland

1944

1 Jan.	Strikes	Kavieng, New Ireland
4 Jan.	Strikes	Kavieng, New Ireland
29 Jan.-2 Feb.	Strikes	Kwajalein & Eniwetok, Marshall Islands
16-17 Feb.	Strikes	Truk, Caroline Islands
22 Feb.	Strikes	Guam & Tinian, Mariana Islands
30-31 Mar.	Strikes	Babelthuap & Peleliu, Palau Islands
1 April	Strikes	Woleai, Caroline Islands
21-23 April	Strikes & Land Support	Wadke & Hollandia, New Guinea
29-30 April	Strikes	Truk, Caroline Islands
11-24 June	Strikes & Land Support	Saipan, Timian, Guam, Mariana Is.
18-21 July	Land Support	Guam, Mariana Islands
25-27 July	Strikes	Peleliu & Angaur, Palau Islands
4 Aug.	Strikes	Iwo, Volcano Islands

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Actions in Which Engaged

1944 (Cont'd)

5 Aug.	Strikes	Haha & Chichi, Bonin Islands
5-8 Sept.	Strikes	Peleliu & Angaur, Palau Islands
9-14 Sept.	Strikes	Mindanao, Leyte, Cebu, Luzon, Negros, P.I.
17 Sept.	Land Support	Peleliu & Angaur, Palau Islands
21-24 Sept.	Strikes	Manila, Cebu, Panay, Coron, P.I.
10 Oct.	Strikes	Okinawa
12-14 Oct.	Strikes	Formosa
18 Oct.	Strikes	Laoag, Aparri, Luzon, P.I.
21 Oct.	Strikes	Cebu, P.I.
11-14 Nov.	Strikes	Ormoc Bay, Manila, P.I.

1945

16-17 Feb.	Strikes	Tokyo, Japan
19 Feb.	Land Support	Iwo, Volcano Islands
21-22 Feb.	Land Support	Iwo, Volcano Islands
25 Feb.	Strikes	Tokyo, Japan
1 March	Strikes	Okinawa
18 March	Strikes	Kyushu, Japan
19 March	Strikes	Kure Naval Base, Japan
23-27 March	Strikes	Okinawa
28 March	Strikes	Minami Daito Jima
29 March	Strikes	Kyushu, Japan

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Actions in Which Engaged

1945 (Cont'd)

30 Mar.-6 April	Strikes & Land Support	Okinawa
7 April	Strikes	Jap Fleet, S.W. Kyushu
8 April	Land Support	Okinawa
10 April	Strikes	Minami Daito Jima
11-13 April	Land Support	Okinawa
15-16 April	Strikes	Kyushu, Japan
17 Apr.-11 May	Land Support	Okinawa

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Personnel Lost Through Enemy Action

Killed in Action

19 June 1944

STALLINGS, G. A., 1st Lieutenant, USMC.

TAPHILLIAS, G. F., S1c, USN, 762 05 08.

11 May 1945

BARTLETT, H. S., Ensign, USNR, Fresno, Calif.

BAUER, G. A., Ensign, USN, Seattle, Wash.

CHANDLER, G. M., Lieutenant (jg), USN, Monrovia, Calif.

FINLEY, H. Q., Machinist (E), USNR, Shreveport, La.

GOTT, J. W., Lieutenant, USNR, Goshen, New York.

HUTCHINS, G. T., Lieutenant (jg), USNR, Severna Park, Maryland.

LYONS, T. J., Machinist, USNR, Washington, D. C.

SANTEE, R. C., Lieutenant, USNR, San Mateo, Calif.

STRADLEY, P. R., Lieutenant, USNR, Galena, Maryland.

YORK, H. E., Lieutenant (jg), USNR, Washington, D. C.

ABBOTT, C. C., Y2c, USNR, 628 59 61, Winigan, Mo.

ABILDGAARD, G. (n), S1c, USNR, 934 65 56, Veldosta, Ga.

ABRAMOWICZ, S. (n), AM3c, USNR, 710 35 70, Jerico, N. Y.

AHLQUIST, N. H., S1c(ARM), USNR, 712 91 63, Orange, N. J.

ALLEN, J. T., WT1c, USN, 287 46 85, Gray Knob, Ky.

ARBUCKLE, T. A., ARMLc, USNR, 400 32 47, Newton Upper Falls, Mass.

ARINGTON, D. R., Flc(EM), USNR, 935 51 37, Haysi, Va.

BAKER, G. R., S1c(AMM), USNR, 894 73 05, East Detroit, Mich.

BALLEW, M. F., SC2c, USNR, 641 11 75, Denmark, Tenn.

BANESKY, A. F., WT3c, USNR, 822 01 23, McKeesport, Pa.

BANYACSKY, J., MMS3c, USNR, 905 47 18, Perth Amboy, N. J.

BARNES, R. I., MM3c, USNR, 601 28 80, Port Henry, N. Y.

BARRONA, J. S., S2c, USNR, 566 43 10, Santa Monica, Calif.

BARTON, R. E., STM2c, USNR, 981 64 63, Itta Bena, Miss.

BASS, A. T., S1c, USNR, 637 23 40, Smithville, Ga.

BEACH, L. F., MM2c(T), USN-I, 848 87 72, Bethany, Okla.

BECHAMP, A. R., S2c, USNR, 946 36 24, Windsor, Ont., Canada.

BECKNER, E. E., F2c, USNR, 981 12 19, North Charleston, W. Va.

BELDEN, A. G., Jr., EM3c, USNR, 814 30 61, Brooklyn, N. Y.

BENNETT, E. A., WT2c, USNR, 609 21 14, St. Catharines, Ont., Canada.

BENTO, F. A., Bkr2c, USNR, 312 28 74, San Leandro, Calif.

BLACK, J. E., S2c, USNR, 557 47 16, Wawahitchka, Fla.

BONIN, V. (n), S1c, USNR, 202 83 39, Fall River, Mass.

BOSHONEK, W. (n), Bkr1c(T), USN, 223 94 09, New York, N. Y.

BOTELER, A. R., Jr., Mlc(T), USN, 376 13 00, Oakland, Calif.

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BRANAN, W. E., ARTlc(T), USNR, 556 74 15, Sanford, Fla.
BRENNAN, T. F., RdM3c, USNR, 245 85 62, Philadelphia, Penn.
BRINKLEY, R. L., S2c, USNR, 784 30 72, Chattanooga, Tenn.
BROOKHART, G. W., Slc(ARM), USNR, 626 57 06, Vincennes, Ind.
BUCKNER, C. W., S2c, USNR, 753 60 38, Stonefort, Ill.
BURNS, R. P., Jr., S2c, USNR, 293 81 33, Indianapolis, Ind.
CAREY, D. C., S2c, USNR, 307 02 24, LaCrosse, Wis.
CARTWRIGHT, W. H., Jr., Slc(AOM), USN, 205 64 06, Pawtucket, R. I.
CASEY, B. E., GM2c, USNR, 724 71 14, Hebron, Ind.
CERVENAK, A. M., Slc, USNR, 949 69 52, Cleveland, Ohio.
CHILDRESS, H. L., S2c, USNR, 273 39 53, Brewton, Ala.
CHRISTENSEN, D. A., SC2c, USN, 372 43 80, Council Bluffs, Iowa.
CIABATTONI, A. J., Flc, USNR, 815 89 35, Wilmington, Del.
CLARK, D. W., Slc, USNR, 939 03 84, Blossom, Texas.
CLAUNCH, S. A., EM2c, USN-I, 885 93 00, Pacific Grove, Calif.
CLINE, J. W., SC2c, USNR, 376 74 63, Irvingtown, Calif.
COATES, H. A., EM1c, USNR, 605 23 60, Georgiana, Ala.
COLA, N. T., StM1c, USNR, 645 84 91, New Orleans, La.
COLLETT, T. A., S2c, USNR, 975 88 43, Steele, Ala.
COLONA, L. J., Flc, USNR, 818 20 22, Malvern, Penn.
COPPLE, W. H., Flc(EM), USNR, Chester, Pa.
CZAJA, T. P., MM2c, USNR, Minneapolis, Minn.
DALRYMPLE, R. L., S2c, USNR, Highland Hts., Ohio.
DANFORD, D. J., Slc, USNR, 273 39 47, Eufaula, Ala.
DANSBY, J. E., Flc, USNR, 981 12 09, Frankston, Texas.
D'ELIA, O. T., EM1c(T), USNR, 647 44 11, Jersey City, N. J.
DE NIKE, C. E., Jr., S2c, USNR, 881 76 83, Los Angeles, Calif.
DePILLO, R. J., SF2c(T), USNR, 202 90 55, Mansfield, Mass.
DINGES, E. H., Slc, USNR, 957 78 24, Lincoln, Nebraska.
DUNLEAVY, D. A., AOM2c, USNR, 646 33 73, New York, N. Y.
DUVAL, J. P., MM2c, USNR, 607 75 14, Pawtucket, R. I.
EAKEN, M. E., S2c, USNR, 950 05 29, Medina, Ohio.
ENGEL, E. W., Slc, USN, 307 01 48, Oshkosh, Wis.
ENOS, H. P., Flc, USNR, 956 77 69, Skiddy, Kansas.
ESCOBAR, M. G., St2c, USNR, 633 45 45, Glendale, Calif.
ETHIER, L. J., S2c, USNR, 758 42 65, St. Paul, Minnesota.
EVANS, W. L., S2c, USNR, 881 75 26, Bellflower, Calif.
FARR, C. J., Flc(MMS), USN-I, 870 60 17, Minneapolis, Minn.
FIGUEROA, F. B., S2c, USNR, 581 09 24, Tucson, Ariz.
FINLEY, R. H., Slc, USNR, 609 71 77, Lockport, N. Y.
FOLEY, M. N., MMR3c(T), USNR, 621 75 18, LeMars, Iowa.
FRECHETTE, A. E., Slc, USNR, 202 68 32, Collinsville, Mass.
FULS, C. R., Flc(EM), USNR, 948 66 67, Dayton, Ohio.
FUQUA, C. M., ACOM, USN, 267 95 98, Jacksonville, Fla.
FURROW, R. H., EM1c, USN, 234 39 52, Niagara Falls, N. Y.
GATTUSO, J. A., Slc(AMM), USNR, 726 52 84, Aurora, Ill.
GIBSON, R. D., Flc, USNR, 629 67 48, Palco, Kansas.
GILLAM, J. A., CSP(A)(PA), USNR, 877 89 32, Anacortes, Wash.

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GREENBERG, A. (n), S1c(AMM), USNR, 816 42 29, Brooklyn, N. Y.
GRIDER, J. B., Jr., SK1c, USNR, 654 40 61, Tillamook, Oregon.
GRIECO, L. J., Bkr2c, USNR, 204 72 96, Providence, R. I.
HALL, J. Q., ART3c, USNR, 657 17 60, Autryville, N. C.
HANKINS, D. L., S2c, USNR, 941 75 34, Forest, Ohio.
HAYS, J. D., S2c, USNR, 293 81 32, Indianapolis, Ind.
HENDERSON, E. B., PhM3c(T), USNR, 857 35 36, Scio, Ohio.
HERRING, A. S., S2c, USNR, 246 89 62, Philadelphia, Pa.
HERSCH, H. F., S1c(AMM), USNR, 942 32 10, St. Louis, Mo.
HOARD, C. A., S2c, USNR, 313 68 67, Pompeii, Mich.
HOLBROOK, W. (n), WT2c(T), USNR, 755 54 82, Seco, Ky.
HOLLINGSWORTH, J. T., S1c(AMM), USNR, 920 95 32, Philadelphia, Pa.
HOLT, G. W., EM3c, USNR, 871 20 19, Duluth, Minn.
HOPF, D. V., EM3c, USNR, 612 40 93, Cincinnati, Ohio.
HOPKINS, R. D., S2c, USNR, 659 77 05, Fieldale, Va.
HOWARTH, J. A., S2c, USNR, 246 83 55, Philadelphia, Pa.
HOWER, T. G., Y3c(T), USNR, 956 69 62, Russell, Kansas.
HUFF, C. F., Flc, USN-I, 980 52 40, Ava, Mo.
IRELAND, J. B., WT3c(T), USN-I, 854 21 67, Peoria, Ill.
JAMES, F. L., AOM1c, USNR, 628 36 00, Quenemo, Kanas.
JEEVES, T. L., AMM2c(T), USNR, 879 28 33, Santa Monica, Calif.
JONES, C. A., ART3c, USNR, 575 22 58, Greenville, S. C.
JORDAN, G. (n), Jr., Flc(MMS), USNR, 940 98 61, Columbus, Ohio.
KAFFELMAN, E. I., EM2c(T), USNR, 802 14 50, Worcester, Mass.
KEENAN, E. J., F2c(EM), USNR, 579 36 18, Hingham, Mass.
KNIGHT, D. F., MM2c, USNR, 823 03 41, Bath, Me.
KOSKI, F. D., S2c, USNR, 959 94 37, Ishpeming, Mich.
KRISTOF, E. (n), MM1c, USNR, 611 66 90, Chicago, Ill.
LAGASSE, R. M., Flc, USNR, 209 10 73, Old Town, Maine.
LAMPE, E. C., Jr., MM3c(T), USNR, 867 38 26, Louisville, Ky.
LAPIERRE, E. E., S1c, USNR, 811 26 45, Union, N. J.
LAROCCA, M. A., Jr., EM2c, USN, 283 49 90, Masury, Ohio.
LAURENT, E., Jr., BM1c, USN, 375 91 83, Kenwood, Calif.
LEWELLYN, C. W., S1c, USNR, 929 29 15, Harrisville, W. Va.
LEWELLYN, W. T., S1c, USNR, 929 29 18, Berea, West Virginia.
LEWIS, C. E., Flc, USNR, 293 35 53, Lafayette, Indiana.
LIPPINCOTT, H. H., EM3c, USNR, 866 87 41, Wichita, Kansas.
LORENZ, G. B., Jr., EM2c, USN-I, 876 54 82, Victor, Colo.
LUND, L. R., S1c, USNR, 823 03 10, East Machias, Maine.
LUTZ, W. H., AOM1c, USNR, 651 65 04, Mahanoy City, Penn.
LYNCH, H. J., Jr., Flc, USNR, 944 94 23, Chicago, Ill.
LYNCH, J. P., S1c, USNR, 802 10 62, Dorchester, Mass.
MALVONE, L. A., MM3c(T), USNR, 802 23 55, Boston, Mass.
MANCHER, C. E., EM3c, USNR, 811 27 03, Paterson, New Jersey.
MANKE, E. K., HALc, USNR, 872 14 35, Plainview, Nebr.
MARCHISE, M. J., WT3c, USN-I, 856 68 38, Bellaire, Ohio.

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MOONEY, R. J., Sr., ARM3c(T), USNR, 883 79 62, Pendleton, Ore.
WILEY, R. F., Flc, USNR, 864 84 56, New Castle, Ind.
WITT, R. L., AMM3c(T), USNR, 659 31 40, Roanoke, Virginia.
WOOD, E. B., Flc(EM), USN-I, 848 14 47, Sandy Hook, Miss.
YENNEY, L. P., S1c(ARM), USNR, 765 25 12, Walla Walla, Wash.
ZABKA, J. W., S1c(PR), USNR, 899 06 40, Dudley, Mass.
ZBINDEN, R. L., RT1c, USNR, 610 95 43, Sterling, Ill.
REINERT, D. S., AOM2c, USN, 244 31 13, Egypt, Pa.
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PART II - NARRATIVE

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U.S.S. BUNKER HILL

Hull 1509 created no undue excitement as she took shape at the Fore River Shipyards of the Bethlehem Steel Company at Quincy, Massachusetts. It had been decided that the piles of steel plates, the endless drums of wire, and the countless numbers of hoses and other electrical equipment which lay on the ground adjacent to the building slip would soon be put together in the form of a new aircraft carrier to bear the name "BUNKER HILL". The new baby of the Navy would be the first to bear that commemorative name, and would everybody hoped, be the last as well. And, judging from the determination that the workers put into the hull, that hope would come to pass.

Standing by a window in an office-building which was close to the slip was the man who would soon take command of the ship, and would guide its future as she steamed majestically from the building yard to the Pacific theater of war to do her part in combat with the enemy. Under his watchful eye, the ship and her ever-growing crew grew daily. Officers and men reported to the Supervisor of Ships at Quincy, for "temporary duty with CFO BUNKER HILL, and on board when in commission". Some remained at Quincy, assisting the Captain with the myriad of details which confronted the huge undertaking; others were stationed at the Fargo Building in Boston, to attend the multitude of schools established to fit sailors to the momentous task before them.

Gradually, the impersonal aspect of Hull 1509 was replaced by a new and vigorous enthusiasm of a personality, and the name BUNKER HILL

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came to mean to the city of Quincy what Quincy's namesake meant to Charlestown. Captain Ballentine was more than merely a commanding officer; he was the BUNKER HILL - the man on whom three thousand officers and men were to pin their hopes in the months to come. A kindly, sympathetic person, he talked to his new officers more like a father than a Skipper, and looked after his men with a thoughtfulness undreamed of by them. This attitude towards him grew as the ship grew, and was as strong as the plates of the ship herself.

On 7 December 1942 - exactly one year after the "day of infamy" - the BUNKER HILL was christened by Mrs. Donald S. Boynton and slid down the building ways, to begin her long and close contact with the briny blue. And, as the cold and snowy days of winter gave way to the uncertain warmth of New England spring, the mass of steel took shape, and became recognizable as a carrier. Giant cranes lifted two hundred tons of directors and anti-aircraft guns into place; welders fitted armored plates across empty spaces; the engine-rooms and shaft-alleys were filled with equipment; an island rose on the starboard side of the flight deck; riggers hoisted planking and created a flight-deck - in short, a new carrier assumed its final shape.

25 May 1943 dawned bright, clear, and warm. It was an auspicious day for an auspicious event - CFO BUNKER HILL was to become USS BUNKER HILL, and would take her role beside her sister ships of all sizes and classes. Little Bobby McCarthy, of Boston, presented the battle ensign

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to Captain Ballentine, and urged the ship and her crew forward with the words "go get 'em". The speeches by Under-secretary of the Navy, James V. Forrestal, Rear Admiral Theobald, U.S. Navy, Commandant of the First Naval District, and Governor Leverett Saltonstall were no more to the point than Bobby's brief exhortation! On the eve of the first operation, Captain Ballentine, addressing the crew over the public address system, said: "Now we'll have a chance to do what that boy in Boston told us to do - 'go get 'em'!".

The work of getting the ship ready for combat now began in earnest. Working parties strained and struggled under the weight of tons and tons of food, supplies, and ammunition; offices had every last bit of data on all that came aboard; the navy yard at Boston was more than generous in fulfilling the whims of department heads and special training officers; and Boston itself treated the men of the BUNKER HILL in fine style. One afternoon in the early part of June saw the first of many landings as the Air Officer, Commander J.M. Carson, U.S. Navy, caught the number one wire for a perfect recovery.

Steaming into the Chesapeake Bay was a thrill never to be forgotten by those present. The Air Group was awaiting the ship at NAS, Norfolk, and the ship was anxious to see who and what would be based aboard. Suddenly, out of the early morning light on the morning of 27 June, came a thunderous roar as Fighting 17 led a simulated attack

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on the ship, followed by the dive-bombers and torpedo-planes of the other two squadrons - Corsairs, Helldivers, Avengers - three names and three silhouettes which were to mean life or death to those that sailed. It was the Air Group's first sight of their new home.

For the following two weeks, the ship exercised herself and the Air Group in the confines of the Bay - air operations, gunnery exercises, seamanship, gunnery, and more air. The FOX flags and the whistles got the taste of what was to be normal procedure in the days to come. The handling crews on the flight and hangar decks became expert in their jobs, and the jeep and tractor drivers found new ways of pulling planes over, under, and around other planes. The members of the gunnery department spent a part of every day at their guns, tracking planes and shooting sleeves, to say nothing of gruelling hours of recognition instruction. The engineers answered the signals from the bridge, and the supply department catered to the wants of the crew. The preliminary shake-down cruise in the Bay progressed nicely, and was a fore-runner of the days to come.

On 15 July, the ship and her Air Group got underway for Trinidad, where three full weeks of operations of every kind were scheduled. The cry "relieve the watch, set condition Two modified, watch III" became familiar to ears which heretofore had listened for "Now the liberty party muster abreast the after brow". All in all, the ship and her crew were making final preparations in a relatively peaceful spot to

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become proficient in the art of war.

6 August found the ship heading north, for the haven and final liberty on the east coast. At Norfolk, the Air Group disembarked to spend another three weeks in perfecting their tactics, while the ship proceeded to Boston for a final post-repair overhaul and last-minute additions. Everything was inspected, radars calibrated, guns bore-sighted, arresting-gear greased and re-greased, more supplies taken aboard. And, on the afternoon of 4 September, the ship slipped out of the Navy yard, passed through the maze of islands in the harbor, and set course for Norfolk, and eventually the Panama Canal, San Diego, and Pearl Harbor.

The trip through the canal was uneventful, with normal operations being conducted en route. One liberty in Cristobal, and one liberty in Balboa gave the majority of the crew their final nights ashore. The BUNKER HILL was really a part of the Pacific Fleet when she reached Cristobal where on 16 September 1943, she reported to Cincpac for duty.

At San Diego, the ship was loaded for the trip to Pearl. On board were the 92nd Construction Battalion, Fighting Squadron 18 - which was to replace Fighting 17 upon arrival, - a hangar deck full of marine flyers and ground-crews, and a flight-deck loaded with Corsairs, Hellcats, Helldivers, Avengers, and six PV's. Operations en route to Pearl were, of course, nil, due to the crowded conditions of the ship. Nevertheless, General Quarters sounded every morning one hour before sunrise, and the

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crew took such early hours as a matter of course.

Pearl Harbor was reached on the morning of 2 October. By midnight, the passengers had been disembarked: VFM Squadron 422 (295); Defense Cadre 25, USMC(212); USN CB 92 (836); VMF Squadron 113 (290); and miscellaneous personnel amounting to 960 - a total of 2,593 officers and men. Once more, the ship became a fighting carrier, with the officers and men of the ship's company and Air Group once more settled in their "home".

During the period 3 October 1943 to 6 January 1944, the BUNKER HILL went from many pieces of steel to a single personality, and her crew became a welded unit rather than three thousand plus individuals. 3 October found the BUNKER HILL in Pearl Harbor, *(1), actually a part of the Pacific Fleet, and the newest of the new fast carriers. The next weeks were spent in the training area of Hawaii, where the pilots landed and took off time after time, both day and night, the flight and hanger deck handling crews had a chance to dodge in and out of whirling propellers and vicious slip-streams, the gunnery boys fired at sleeves and brushed up on their recognition, the supply department got things they needed (and some they didn't), and the engineers gave all their machinery the final touches. In addition, general drills were conducted until everybody knew what was to be done "when and if", and everyone had a chance to find out for himself that the happy days of Boston and Fargo - and even Norfolk - were at an end.

*(1) Ship's log, pg. 171.

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On 21 October, the BUNKER HILL became a unit of TG 53.3, *(1), a large group of all types of vessels, bound west and south for ESPIRITU SANTO, and the real stuff. On this trip, for the first time, many saw what was then an unbelievable force, and had to face and conquer such troubles as TBS signals, code names, flag hoists, and independent manoeuvering. This dull and drab routine, broken only by King Neptune and his court initiating neophytes into the Order of Shellbacks on 26 October, continued with nary a let-up until 5 November, when the ship arrived safe and sound in the anchorage at ESPIRITU SANTO.

On the 7th, hearts beat fast, and a seriousness came over the ship as she weighed anchor and headed out to sea, *(2). This proved to be a false alarm, however, because she returned to berth the following morning. Late that afternoon, the ship really did get under way, bound northwards for the initial operation - a strike on Jap shipping at RABAUL - along with the ESSEX (CTG 50.3, *(3)), the INDEPENDENCE, and a small destroyer screen.

The story of RABAUL will live long in the memory of those who took part, *(4). For one thing, it was the first of a series of holiday strikes, which series was to earn for the ship the name of, among other things, "HOLIDAY EXPRESS". For another, it marked the initial appearance of the F4U's as shipboard fighters - Lieut-Comdr. "Tommy" Blackburn's famous "SKULL AND BONES" squadron (VF-17), and

*(1) Ship's log, pg. 196

*(2) Ibid., pg. 223

*(3) Ibid., pg. 225

*(4) USS BUNKER HILL Year Book

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the first fighter squadron based on board - flew CAP for the Task Group as the air group fighters accompanied the bombers and torpedo planes in to the target. Thirdly, 11 November 1943, saw the advent of a new carrier-based dive-bomber, the "Helldiver", which was to run up an extremely satisfactory record during the months to come, *(1). It also proved that the altitude-determining radar of the "SM" model would greatly assist defensive operations, both for the ship's gunners and the CAP. On that day, the new and relatively untried impulse ammunition, the VT 5"/38 Cal. type Mk.32, had its first real work-out, and proved that it was practically the answer to enemy dive-bombing attacks. Lastly, that date marked the beginning of the type of naval warfare which was to govern future operations for over a year - the "fast carrier task force" which, up until that date, had had only two tests in the MARCUS and WAKE ISLAND raids of about two months before.

The offensive strike was a great success, with planes doing a maximum amount of damage to enemy shipping, *(2). The plan was to launch a second strike just after noon; in fact, several planes were air-borne when the Japs came out in full force - final estimates reached about 160 enemy planes *(3) - bent for complete annihilation of the raiders. The "SK" radar picked up the bogies at about 110 miles, and tracked them into 80 miles, where the "SM" got the contact, and the ship went to General Quarters. Planes were still being launched

*(1) "HELLDIVER SQUADRON" by Robert Olds.

*(2) USS BUNKER HILL Action Report of 11 Nov. 1943, Enclosure (A).

*(3) Ibid., Enclosure (B).

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when the Recognition Officer in Air Forward sighted the nearest formation of Japs - thirty-three Vals flying in a loose Vee - headed directly for the group. The forward 5" battery was brought to bear and opened up at 15,000 yds. So good was the solution of the Mk.37 director that two Vals were splashed before the Japs split up for their attack. Then all hell broke loose. An F6F, just being launched for the strike which never went, shot down a Kate on the starboard bow, even before he had a chance to raise his wheels and flaps. Jap and American planes flew all about the group: diving, zooming, shooting. It made more work for the gunners as they put their strenuous recognition training to practical use in distinguishing between friend and foe, but it was well worth it.

Extracts from the chronological log of battle indicated the intensity of defensive events that day:

1315 CIC reported many bogies bearing 320 true, 113 miles.....

1325 Commenced launching planes for second strike at...RABAUL...

1313 CIC reported many bogies in three groups close together bearing 340 degrees true, 80 miles.....

1344 Flagship reports raids being intercepted at 345 degrees true, 45 miles.....

1347 From flagship: raid at 340 degrees true, 27 miles.....

1351 Sighted large group of planes high.....

1354 Opened fire.....

1410 From CTG: expect an attack from 000 degrees.....

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1412 From CTG: MAN YOUR GUNS AND BLAST THOSE BASTARDS OUT OF
THE SKY...

1420 More bogies...

1430 Watch out for torpedo planes...

1440 Attack about over...

1508 Watch out for torpedo planes...

1524 Watch out for dive-bombers...

1543 Many bogies...11 miles...*(1)

Such close-in support by the CAP brought about a new type of fighter-direction - probably never afterwards used - whereby the pilots would watch where the gunners were shooting, and would find the Japs in the middle of the bursts. So close was the CAP operation, in fact, that the guns were shooting at a Val who was being chased by a Corsair, who, in turn, was being chased by a Zeke! In addition, the gyrations which Captain Ballentine put the ship through in avoiding torpedoes, and in out-guessing near misses of enemy bombs, did nothing to ease the fire-control problem.

But the ship must have lived right, for when "cease firing, the screens are clear" came over the circuits some sixty minutes later, the ship was in a better condition than she had been before. She went into battle green and inexperienced, and had come out the victor - tried, true, and ready (but not necessarily willing) for further assaults against the little yellow men. As she retired towards

*(1) CO USS BUNKER HILL Secret Ltr CV17/A16-3, 007 of 12 November 1943
*(2) USS BUNKER HILL Action report of 11 November 1943, Enclosure (B)

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ESPIRITU that night, with a full moon shining down on her, everybody had that satisfied feeling of a job well done. Rear Admiral Montgomery and Rear Admiral Shafroth also felt that way: the endorsements to the action report read: "The creditable performance of the BUNKER HILL in repelling her first heavy air attack is noted - with satisfaction and pride." *(1)

The stay in ESPIRITU lasted overnight, only long enough to take on stores, fuel oil, and gasoline. On the 14th of November, the ship got underway again, this time for the invasion of TARAWA and the occupation of the GILBERT ISLANDS. CTG 50.3 was still in the ESSEX as the sortie was made from the anchorage. After refueling from a tanker, a support unit of cruisers and more destroyers joined the carriers. The landings were scheduled for the 20th, but the group was under attack from the 18th on. Anti-aircraft actions at this time were fought on the 18th and the 20th, both at sunset, during periods of poor visibility. Once again the "SM" proved invaluable, as it picked up bogies too low for the standard air-search sets, and too high for the surface radars. Working in close conjunction with CIC, the lookouts sighted the bogies far enough away from the ship to allow all guns to be manned before they had closed to effective gun-range. On the night of the 18th, one Betty was fired upon and soon disappeared from all radar screens - either driven off or shot down.* (2)

*(1) USS BUNKER HILL Action report of 11 Nov. 1943, Enc. (A) and (B).

*(2) Ship's log, pg. 246.

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On the evening of the 20th, a much larger attack was launched at the group, *(1). Once again, CIC functioned well, as ASP, CAP, radars, and visual lookouts all combined to spot a group of about 18 Bettys approaching in close formation. All planes attacking the BUNKER HILL were destroyed, the ship's guns accounting for four, with an additional three probables, *(2). With the exception of the torpedoing of the INDEPENDENCE, all the ships escaped damage.

During the so-called "Galvanic Operation", the ship was assigned to the Southern Carrier Group, with the Air Groups engaged in air and surface bombardment of BITITU ISLAND. And, when the landings had been made, air support was to be furnished the ground troops at TARAWA as requested. During the six days of bombardments, two hundred three and one half tons of bombs were dropped on various targets, *(3), with very few casualties or losses to planes or personnel. The ship was refueled once during those six days. The 4,000th landing was made on the 23rd by Lt(jg). A.G. Manson, U.S.N.R., of VF-18.

On 26 November, CTG 50.4 (Rear Admiral F.C. Sherman, OTC, on board, *(4)) conducted operations eastward of the GILBERT ISLANDS, for the purpose of furnishing CAP for MAKIN ISLAND, *(5). Although bogies were picked up in the course of this phase of the operations, the ship

*(1) Ship's log, pg. 253.

*(2) USS BUNKER HILL Action Report of 20 Nov. 1943, Enc. (B).

*(3) CVL7/A16-3, 0014, GALVANIC OPERATION, 18-26 Nov., Action Report

*(4) Ship's log, pg. 269.

*(5) CVL7/A16-3, 0022, GALVANIC OPERATION, 26 Nov. to 6 Dec. 1943.

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did not destroy any with its guns. However, CAP, ASP, and the guns of the heavy and light support units splashed several snoopers. On 28 November, again at dusk and early night, five bettys made runs on the group, but failed to do any damage. The BUNKER HILL fired with 5-inch, but the Japs never closed to effective gun range.

During this operation, the gunnery department got a real work-out. After having been more or less surprised by sunset snoopers during the first part of the "Galvanic Operation," routine Torpedo Defense was sounded each evening from thirty minutes before sunset to one hour after, *(1). For the most part, such procedure was needless, as the Japs did not come out every single evening. When they did appear, the effort proved itself worthy, for the guns were always manned and ready, and the gun crews were not crowded out of ladders and passageways by curious sightseers who would make a mad dash for the flight deck and other topside vantage points whenever the bugle blew its frantic summons.

The Jap procedure during these evening attacks and snooper operations was to utilize float lights, flares, blinkers, and other means of signaling and searching to augment what radar sets they had. In general, such efforts proved futile, but often caused the ship's personnel some worried moments as reports of planes diving from above turned out to be Venus, and flares on the horizon were identified as Mars. Not only was that true of this ship, but other ships often concurred in the initial flash reports.

*(1) Ship's log, pg. 257.

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No strikes were flown during these eleven days; only the routine patrols, plus the CAP over MAKIN ISLAND. One point of excitement was a radar contact of a large group of bogies, closing, which later proved to be B-24's with weak IFF. The ship was refueled once during that time. Losses of personnel were very light, and the ship was not damaged.

On 6 December, the ship joined up with TG 50.8. Rear Admiral F.C. Sherman, on board the BUNKER HILL, was OTC. The force began retiring south, headed towards ESPIRITU SANTO once more. En route, strikes were launched against NAURU, and were of a routine nature. Although the ship started the morning of the eighth in Condition I-easy, nary an enemy plane was seen in the area around the group, and the regular condition III watch was set. The pilots found conditions similar at the target - flak was medium, but there were no enemy planes.

The ship arrived in ESPIRITU on 12 December, and engaged in what little recreational facilities could be had on that rainy and muddy "paradise of the South Pacific." The Air Group flew ashore, and spent the ensuing ten days living on the beach, flying and coming over to the ship for meals - they claimed that the food ashore was terrible. Tons and tons of mail, along with bombs, gasoline, fuel, and provisions kept the crew well occupied. Then too, with the Christmas spirit pervading the atmosphere, everybody was relatively happy. A few people, after the strenuous operations at RABAUL and TARAWA, decided that it was time to put in their chits for some shore duty, but nothing seemed to come of it.

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On 14 December, the ship lost a valuable officer in the person of Commander F.F. Agens, U.S. Navy, the Chief Engineer. He had guided the destinies of the engineering department from pre-commissioning days in Quincy, and was in large part responsible for the efficiency of that department. His relief was the assistant engineer, Commander D.F. Kinert, U.S. Navy. And, on the 15th, the Executive Officer, Captain C.E. Ekstrom, U.S. Navy, was detached and ordered to the States for pre-commissioning duty with a CVE detail. His place was taken by quiet, serious Commander C.A. Ferriter, U.S. Navy, the First Lieutenant and former submariner.

The 22nd of December found the BUNKER HILL as flagship for Task Group 37.2, underway for a series of raids against shipping at KAVIENG, NEW IRELAND, *(1). Operations were indefinite - the amount of shipping at that Jap base was unknown, and the group was to launch strikes as advisable. Few people in the ship's company realized it, but this series of strikes - on Christmas Day, New Year's day, and 4 January - was the most dangerous up to date, and for some time thereafter. The group was the smallest one yet to make a run deep into enemy territory since the BUNKER HILL had joined the fleet. There was the BUNKER HILL, one CVL, and a small destroyer screen.

At sunset on Christmas Day, the ship engaged some more Bettys - two groups of them. None were shot down, nor was the ship damaged. In fact, the Japs seemed to be running out of determined pilots; and,

*(1) Ship's log, pg. 323.

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as yet, the "Kamakaze Kids" hadn't been introduced to the wondering public. After the shooting, the group continued to move away from the target toward a rendezvous point with the ever-present tankers. Fueling completed, the group continued on a south-easterly course. On the morning of the 29th, destroyers were being fueled from the carriers. While alongside, the course was reversed to a north-westerly direction - the ship and fueling destroyer got a "Well done" from the Task Group Commander for making the course change without having to knock off pumping for a moment *(1) - and back headed the group for another strike at the Japs. Reports had come in, indicating that a Jap task force was headed toward KAVIENG, and CTG 37.2 was given the task of seeking out and destroying any and all enemy shipping in this area. So, on New Year's day of 1944, the Christmas day strike was repeated; and again on the night of 2 January, another high-speed run to the target was made to be in position for the morning of the fourth. Early on the morning of the 5th, it was finally decided, much to the relief of the ship's company and air group, that the shipping had either flown or been sunk. So back once again went the ship, towards the haven offered in ESPIRITU, and much-needed rest and relaxation for the next operation.

*(1) Ship's log, pg. 337

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With the knowledge that behind them was a job well done, the prospect of a much-needed rest and the pleasures of the beach seemed all the more enticing. By noon the BUNKER HILL with her screening destroyers was once again safely anchored in the harbor. The seemingly endless series of KAVIENG strikes now a thing of the past, mail and liberty soon dispelled the tenseness and fatigue induced by the "holiday" activities. This was no rest period for the ship's company, however.

Shortly after dropping anchor, the task of replenishing and preparing for future missions began. Bombs, ammunition and supplies of every variety flowed steadily to the ship, and with the knowledge that the BUNKER HILL was but a single unit of a vast fleet, the logistic problem of the Pacific war came clearly into focus.

For twelve days the ship lay at anchor, and although all hands were generally preoccupied with the countless routine tasks attendant upon a combatant vessel's replenishment period in part, the security and beautiful tranquility of ESPIRITU worked wonders for taut nerves and tired bodies. In short order, KAVIENG was a misty memory and all minds turned eagerly to the future. Rumor ran rife concerning our next assignment. Morale was high, and with the confidence born of RABAUL, the GILBERTS and KAVIENG, the announcement of our next task was eagerly awaited.

On 15 January, Commander J.M. Carson, the air officer, relieved Commander C.A. Ferriter as Executive Officer and Commander W.O. Smith, who was later to lose his life off the MARIANAS, became Air Officer.

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On 18 January Raymond Clapper, the internationally known correspondent, and Mr. F.E. Mason, special assistant to the Secretary of the Navy, reported aboard. Mr. Clapper's presence added much to the already excellent morale of the ship, because through his efforts, families and friends would become familiar with what was happening and the type of life we were leading. The fact that so outstanding a representative of the Press had come aboard to appraise the ship was sufficient incentive for every officer and man to do his very best.

The fourth estate was further represented by Spencer Davis of the Associated Press. It was indeed an honor to play host to such outstanding visitors. Also on this day it was announced that the ship would get under way the following morning.

At 0415 on 19 January preparations for getting underway were made, and at 0508 the BUNKER HILL stood out of the ESPIRITU harbor for the last time. The BUNKER HILL sortied as part of Task Group 37.2 with Rear Admiral F.A. Sherman aboard as Group Commander. Later in the morning the Air Group rejoined and it was announced that a rendezvous was to be made within a few hours with Task Group 37.1 which was comprised of our newest and most powerful battleships. In due course the rendezvous was effected, and the ship in company proceeded as Task Force 37 towards FUNAFUTI to report to Commander Central Pacific Force, Rear Admiral Lee in the WASHINGTON Commanding. The ultimate task was still undisclosed, but from the power of the Force, it was obvious that

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the forthcoming operation was one of significance.

On 19 January the anchor was dropped in FUNAFUTI harbor. Here the ship remained until the 23rd. The day before we again set forth, Captain Ballentine accepted an appointment as Rear Admiral in the United States Navy. This news was greeted with mingled emotions, because it was probable that this much deserved promotion meant that his tour of duty as skipper was ending.

On the morning of 23 January the BUNKER HILL sortied as part of TG 58.5 with Rear Admiral Lee as Group Commander. The ship was now a unit of a Force that in the long and arduous months to come was destined to make Naval history. Captain Ballentine revealed the information every person aboard had been waiting for. The BUNKER HILL was to take part in an amphibious invasion of the MARSHALL ISLANDS and was at the moment proceeding to a rendezvous with the remainder of Task Force 58. This was effected at 0800 on 25 January.

Of all the amphibious operations conducted in 1944 by the U.S., none proved more completely successful than the invasion of the MARSHALLS. It had been generally conceded that the operations would be difficult and that with twenty-five years to prepare defenses, the enemy would exact a heavy toll in men and materials. In this campaign, the strategy was to by-pass the Jap outer fringe of defensive islands and strike at the strategic center of this island group which was KWAJALEIN.

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On 25 January in company with the COWPENS, MONTEREY, IOWA, NEW JERSEY, WICHITA and nine screening destroyers, the units became Task Group 58.3 with Rear Admiral F.A. Sherman aboard as the Task Group Commander. The stage was set for the approach to the target area.

The next four days were uneventful. Flight operations were confined to CAP's and ASP's. Only those flights were made which were absolutely necessary. Every ounce of energy was conserved for the forthcoming strikes.

At 0340 on the morning of 29 January, the ship went to flight quarters and shortly thereafter the Group turned into the wind to launch aircraft. The mission assigned the carrier air groups was to destroy all aircraft found in the air or on the ground and to render the air fields of KWAJALEIN inoperative. During the day Air Group 17 flew 123 sorties and dropped 49 tons of bombs on KWAJALEIN installations. The effectiveness of the strike became apparent when at the end of the day it was realized that not a single Jap plane had approached the formation.

That evening TG 58.3 left the KWAJALEIN area and took position off the Jap staging base of ENIWETOK to act as an interceptor force to any Naval or air power that might be sent from TRUK to reinforce the MARSHALLS. During the next four days TG 58.3 concentrated on ENIWETOK airfields and again not a Jap plane was encountered near the formation. Surprise was complete and after the first day's strikes,

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the Japs had very little left with which to defend themselves, and nothing available for counter attack.

Just as every successful operation must take its toll, so the MARSHALL Campaign visited tragedy upon the BUNKER HILL. Thirteen members of Air Group SEVENTEEN made the supreme sacrifice, and Raymond Clapper flew to his death with the torpedo squadron's colorful skipper, Lieut.-Comdr. Frank Whitaker. Always eager for first hand information, Mr. Clapper had flown over the ENIWETOK target area with Commander Whitaker to witness a bombing run by TBF's. The skipper's plane collided in mid-air with his wingman and both planes crashed. There were no survivors.

On 3 February TG 58.3 retired to refuel and replenish. That afternoon the ship's company and the Air Group assembled on the flight deck to pay final tribute to those who had given their lives to make operation the success it was. As the sun slowly settled behind the horizon and the plaintive notes of "taps" broke the silence, it seemed that the cause for which we were fighting took on new meaning. The selfless example set by those whom we had gathered to honor forged in all hearts a resolve that to the best of our ability, every effort would be expended to ensure, for the generations of Americans to come, that no such task would be theirs as that upon which we were now embarked.

On Friday, 4 February the BUNKER HILL slid into the waters of MOJURO Lagoon, in the eastern MARSHALL ISLANDS, in a manner of speaking,

"home from the sea". At ten thirty-five in the morning of that day she let go the anchor whose plunge into the shimmering depths of a forgotten island-harbor marked the end of her participation in the first phase of the new war in the Pacific. At RABAUL and at KAVIENG she had rung out the old war. She had rung out the war of MACASSAR STRAITS, of the CORAL SEA, of MIDWAY, and of the SOLOMONS, the war which had witnessed a small, if valiant navy matching its daring against the strength of a numerically superior foe. And at NAHRU, the GILBERTS, and most recently, the MARSHALLS, she had rung in the new. She had rung in the war which saw that navy, backed now by the industrial might of an aroused nation, coming into the strength that would inevitably lead to victory.

On the morning of 4 February 1944, in a strange, bright, and watery world, the BUNKER HILL, and the great gray ships that rested around her, lay just over the rim of destiny -- the destiny that led to 14 August 1945.

Booms and gangways were rigged out; boats lowered over the side; the Officer-of-the-Deck shifted his watch to the quarter-deck; and mail, movies, and gedunks became the order of the day. After four months of campaigning against an enemy whose defeats had been evidenced only on paper, most of the officers and men crowded up to the forward part of the ship during the first few hours in port to take a look at the atoll, the first tangible proof of their victory. Under the vastness of the Pacific sky and against the almost equal vastness of the water, the long spines of sand, barely visible above the water,

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that was MAJURO ATOLL, were hardly prepossessing. Up on top of the forward director a fire controlman shifted his phones to the other ear and said bitterly to his companion, "Jesus, Joe, is that what we've been fighting for?"

On Saturday, the 5th, Mr. Frank Mason, special assistant to (then) Secretary of the Navy, Frank Knox, who had come all the way from the High Temples of the Bureau in order to view carrier warfare first hand, left the ship, having "completed his duties aboard." Later that same day, to the genuine sorrow and disappointment of the entire ship's company, Rear Admiral John J. Ballentine, the BUNKER HILL'S first skipper, was detached and succeeded as commanding officer by Captain T. P. Jeter. Ecomiums and laments were plentiful and sincere, and as one man remarked in the general mess: "I used to put my trust in God and Captain Ballentine but I don't think the Lord can do the job now."

Lest we forgot, the Japanese scouted the force the 6th and 7th, coming in close enough on the 6th to cause the entire harbor to go to General Quarters, and the major units to start to get under way. Having re-rigged booms and gangways, re-lowered boats, and severely tested the Officer-of-the-Deck over the seven deck course between the quarter-deck and the bridge, one of the planes from the beach came back without IFF just to prove that life wasn't all sun-bathing on the flight-deck and drinking green beer ashore.

From about the 7th on up until the time we sortied on the 12th the hangar deck resounded to the tramp of rank-ed feet and glinted

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to the splendour of brass-ed hats. Up in the Admiral's country, Mars was at his forge, and the awe-inspiring intelligence began to permeate the ship that next "project" was TRUK.

At three-thirty in the afternoon of the 12th we got under way, target; the Bastion of the Pacific, the Pearl Harbor of Japan -- TRUK.

The three day run to the west was uneventful. Under way routine prevailed. The ship's force was at Condition III and the air group maintained conventional combat air and anti-submarine patrols. There was a certain amount of material preparation for the coming test. Planes whose crews had not been able to get to them during the stay in MAJURO were bore-sighted on the flight-deck and test-fired. First-aid kits throughout the ship were checked for completion of contents, and division officers and Junior Officers held first-aid schools for the enlisted men. On the 13th we test-fired the automatic AA weapons. But by far the most predominant feature of these few days was the sort of mental girding-of-the-loins which went on apace in all departments. In the air group this chiefly took the form of intense application to what meagre information on the target ACI had been able to get hold of. But in the deck and hull, division officers and men quietly gritted their teeth in stern consideration of what could be one of the toughest operations of the war.

On the afternoon of the 14th an ominous note was sounded when the combat air patrol shot down two "Bettys" slightly less than

sixty miles from the ship. On that same day the CAP was doubled and the ASP increased by one bomber.

In those days, before we learned that a close support unit was a battleship that wished a carrier well from a designated spot on the horizon, the BBs looked awfully good. That night the Air Department put two night fighters in condition II, and the Captain came on the ship's public address system to dispel our last, carefully hoarded doubts. TRUK it was - and there were no trains leaving for Grand Central.

At 0550 flight quarters sounded. All over the flight-deck, looking like a grotesque and dormant tent city in the gloom, indistinct forms began to move, dull red lights blinked on and off, the rattle of chocks and the sibilance of cranking propellers was heard. At 0615 "Start Engines" came over the bull horns, and with a rapidly increasing succession of coughs and sputters, first one and then others of the engines caught in a tremendous crescendo of sound. For ten minutes the thunderous roar rolled back over the after end of the ship. Then in that moment of supreme drama in which a snake coils to strike, in which a weapon is stealthily drawn to kill, the red and green running lights blinked slowly on, a green light in primary fly glowed faintly. In front of the first plane a half-crouched figure was barely discernible holding aloft an incandescent stick. The stick described a circular motion, first slowly and then faster, in ever-decreasing circles, finally working itself up to a motionless peak. With it the roar of the engine increased to a pitch that seemed to fill the whole world and throbbed the ears with a strange

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tickling motion. The flames from the exhaust became incredibly clean and blue. For an instant, starter, pilot and plane trembled on the brink of a small but noisome eternity. Then the stick came down. The seven-ton bulk of the F6F lurched forward, gathered speed, and roared into the gloom.

In the words of the deck log, "0700, completed launching 23 VF for fighter sweep on TRUK ATOLL, CAROLINE ISLANDS."

Bogeys materialized only in the form of one VAL that was shot down about 11:30 a.m., thirty-three miles from the ship, and in an abortive attack on the task group off of our starboard quarter at 11:00 p.m.

The force retired to the eastward that night, thankful, hoping the luck would hold on the morrow, but doubting it.

Flight quarters again at 5:50 a.m. on the 17th. Again a twenty-three plane fighter sweep, and after that, three heavy strikes. The third of these, that was launched at 11:28 in the morning, was recalled due to bad visibility over the target and the lack, since yesterday's "turkey shoot", of suitable shipping targets. During the night of the 16th all ships in the harbor that could get under way had evidently left for the first morning flight revealed only the battered, sinking, or sunk hulks that had succumbed the day before.

On the night of the 17th the force retired to the eastward for rendezvous with the tankers. On the morning of the 18th, the PLATTE, GUADELUPÉ, CIMARRON, AOs, and two DEs joined the task group, and the

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18th and 19th were spent in refueling all the ships, exchanging mail and movies, and retrieving pilots and aircrewmen that had been picked out of the water by destroyers.

In the early morning of the 19th the group was snooped by a lone "Betty" that was shot down by the destroyer, IZARD. At General Quarters, more radar contacts were made, but these disappeared from the screen. The ship refueled from the CIMARRON at 1300. By nightfall the entire force was under way to the northwest at a speed of twenty knots — target, the MARIANAS ISLANDS.

February 20th was uneventful and air activity was confined to routine patrols. In the late afternoon of the 21st, a submarine was contacted dead ahead of the force. This was the beginning of rather tardy espionage and subsequent counter attack by the now-aroused enemy.

Bogeys began to appear at 2130 that day, and remained in the vicinity until shortly after midnight. One that ventured too close was shot down by the screen of TF 58.3 shortly after 2300. This was the only attack. They were out there to track the force and were doing the job.

Bogeys appeared again shortly before 0100 on the 22nd and continued in the vicinity until about 1000. As counter-measures the task group executed a great number of emergency turns and launched five VF(N). The tactical situation became extremely critical just before dawn. At this time the fighter sweep was due to take-off against the

MARIANAS, but due to the number of unidentified aircraft in the vicinity all carriers had refrained from starting engines for fear the flame from the exhausts would reveal the ships. Time passed, the sky grew sufficiently light to expose the entire disposition, but still no planes were launched. In the half-murk one bogey penetrated to within six thousand yards but reduced visibility caused only desultory gun-fire from the screen. At 0746, the ship finally catapulted four VF(N) whose mission was, among others, to "proceed to the target, destroy all hostile aircraft seen on the ground and in the air, and return to base." Unidentified aircraft continued to hang around but by 0840 the long-delayed strike was launched and the smaller carriers had launched their CAPs.

From that time on the situation became normal and the strikes came and went according to schedule. By 1340, the ship had launched thirty-nine VB, forty-four VF, and twenty-seven VT. Opposition over TINIAN was experienced from both AA and aircraft. Not having been fooled by the delay east of TRUK, the enemy, to the contrary, seemed to have received excellent intelligence as to our strength, location, and future plans, and was accordingly ready.

Shortly before 1000, two "Bettys" appeared directly astern of the ship just visible above the horizon. These were promptly shot down by the CAP from the COWPENS, bringing to an end to the day's action so far as the ships were concerned except for an additional sub contact in the afternoon.

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Due to the lack of suitable targets all strikes after the early afternoon one were cancelled and that night the group retired to the eastward. Needless to add, the exultation consequent to the easy conquest of TRUK was considerably tempered by "FIRST TINIAN." The only conclusion that anyone could reach in the wardroom that night was that "These Japanese are queer people."

On 26 February 1944, the BUNKER HILL came to a well-earned rest in MAJURO LAGOON to take aboard the necessary implements of war and afford its officers and men a slight "vacation".

The "Queen" stayed in MAJURO for two days and then the anchor was aweigh on 28 February for PEARL HARBOR. The ship arrived at PEARL on 4 March to undergo a routine overhaul. It was on this day that W. Eugene Smith, Spencer Davis and John Beaufort, War Correspondents, left to transmit the ship's heroic actions to a waiting public.

On 5 March the BUNKER HILL was honored to have Rear Admiral Montgomery and his staff report aboard from the ESSEX to resume command of Carrier Division TWELVE. Then, on 6 March the celebrated Air Group SEVENTEEN took its departure for further assignment.

14 March found the ship with three War Correspondents aboard, Dan McGuire of U. P., Phil Reed of I. N. S., and Elmont Waite of A. P. Finally the overhaul was complete and the ship was again under way on 15 March for MAJURO, KAWAJALIEN, TARAWA, ENIWETOK, and all points west. The day was marked by Air Group EIGHT flying aboard in true Navy fashion--no mishaps.

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Air Group EIGHT had as its skipper Comdr. A. M. Jackson, Jr. and a few luminaries such as Lt. E. Scott, (Go Get 'Em) McCuskey with his two Navy Crosses and thrilling stories of times "when the war was really tough", Lt. H. I. Gustafson, Univ. of Penn. favorite varsity end and Navy's fighter pilot; and never to be forgotten Ens. N. W. (Red) Imel the squadron's "character" who stated..."He was gonna smoke 'em out"...then wound up with seven Zekes on his tail on 29 March 1944.

T. G. 58.2 under Rear Admiral Montgomery steamed for MAJURO ATOLL, MARSHALL ISLANDS, and arrived 20 March *(1) to refuel prior to departure for another blow at the "boys from Tokyo". After two days at MAJURO the ship weighed anchor with T. G. 58.2 heading for the PALAU ISLANDS to pay its respects. The first strikes against PALAU and, incidentally, the first operation for the Air Group were made against BABELTHAUP and PELELIU on 30 and 31 March *(2).

On the morning of the 30th the first strike took off at 0700 and before that day was over a total of two hundred nine sorties had been flown. A new record for the ship *(3).

Air opposition to the Air Group was negligible but one of the flights piloted by R. J. Hazel *(4) was shot down by anti-aircraft and he was listed as missing in action. It was the Air Group's first combat loss and spirits were much lower among the "Airdales" that night.

*(1) Ship's log, 20 March 1944.

*(2) Ship's log, 30 & 31 March 1944.

*(3) Ship's Yearbook.

*(4) Ship's Ibid.

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The next strike was made against WOLEAI ISLAND and it occurred on April Fool's Day. No airborne opposition was encountered by either the Air Group or the ship and all three strikes of the day were uneventful, a total of thirty-one tons of bombs being deposited.

Two of the task group's destroyers the HUNT and HICKOX picked up two Jap merchantmen not far from the group and proceeded to sink one and probably sunk the other *(1).

With another Jap scalp under its belt the Task Group anchored in MAJURO LAGOON to prepare for the next operation. On 13 April scuttlebutt had it that the support of landings at WAKDE, HOLLANDIA, and NEW GUINEA were next. The Task Group steamed for nine days, refueling on the 19th to prepare for the 21st. The first strike against WAKDE took off at 0720 loaded to the gills with bombs, rockets, and bullets to be delivered post-haste. No air opposition was encountered and the Air Group did a good job of knocking out anti-aircraft and service installations.

For the next two days, 22 and 23 April, we covered the actual landings at HOLLANDIA and still the enemy opposition was negligible. In the final accounting a total of four hundred nine sorties had been launched dropping one hundred fifty-five tons of bombs. The Air Group got credit for sinking one A.K.

Departing from the HOLLANDIA area the ship steamed east with its "pet hate" THUK, as the next victim.

*(1) Ship's log, 1 April 1944.
*(2) Ship's Yearbook.

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On the eve of the attack a dispatch was received from the Admiral directing the ship to...throw everything, including empty beer bottles, at them... There is no doubt that the ship carried out the Admiral's message to the letter. Aircraft of the first strike against TRUK were launched at 0736 on 29 April *(1).

Shortly after securing from General Quarters a good sized raid of Jap planes was picked up on the radar and fighters were sent out to intercept. They turned out to be a group of bombers, torpedo planes, and fighters. Only about five escaped. Those five reached the task group and commenced low torpedo runs on the carriers from the starboard side. All were greeted with a hail of anti-aircraft and commenced dropping like ducks. One plane (a Jill) miraculously eluded all the anti-aircraft and passed over the bow close enough to throw rocks at, making no attempt to drop a torpedo. This Nip after making such a beautiful run through the whole task group was "splashed" a few minutes later by one of the "friendlies". When the shooting had subsided five Japs had hit the water with the BUNKER HILL'S anti-aircraft guns getting credit for one *(2).

Over the target our air group was concerned with knocking out anti-aircraft installations and service installations which they did very effectively along with knocking out two AK's.

*(1) Ship's Log, 29 April 1944.

*(2) A. A. Action Report, 29 April 1944.

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This day did not pass without losses, however for Lt. (jg) A. A. Foote and his Radioman, E. C. Browder were last seen entering a dive over the target. Also, W. J. Schentz, AMM2c, gunner and C. V. Heighton, ARM3c, radioman both received fatal wounds.

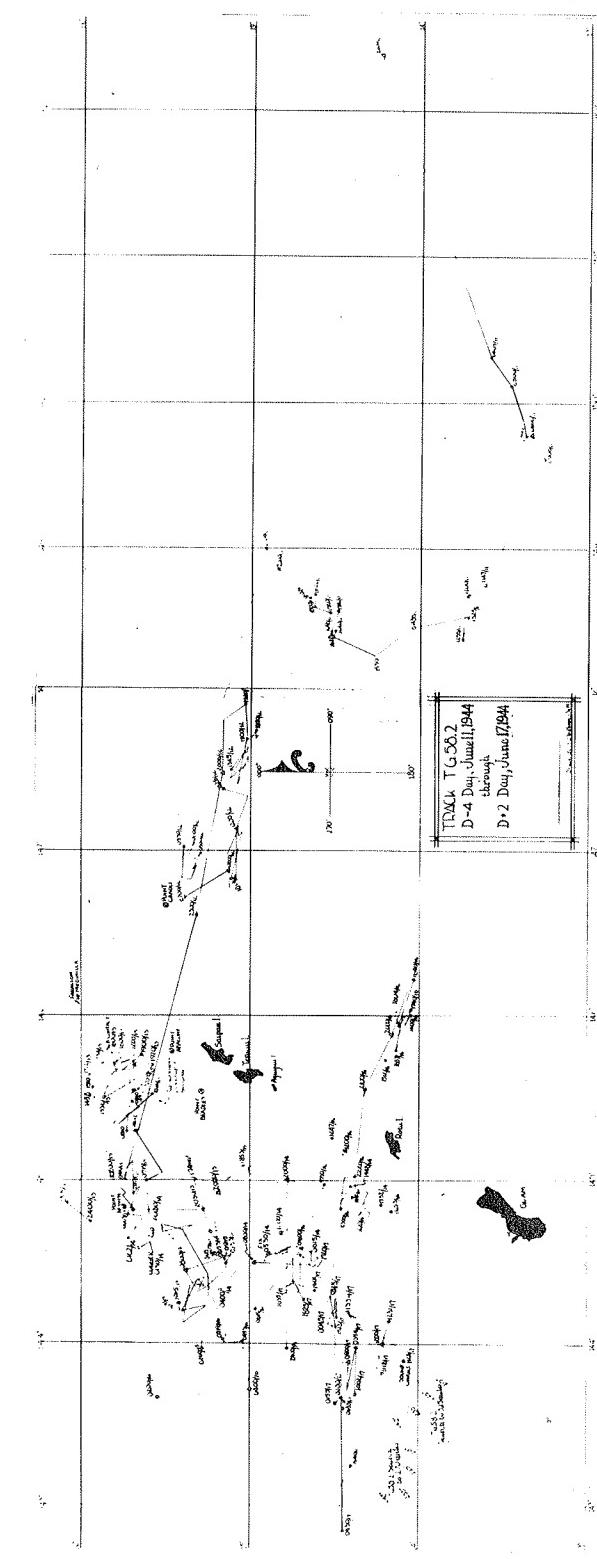
Four strikes were launched the following day. There were no personnel losses, and the Nips did not strike back.

Departure from TRUK was taken during the night of 30 April *(1) to head east. On 2 May the Air Group skipper, Comdr. A. M. Jackson, Jr. joined the Ship's Company when he assumed duty as Navigator. Lt. Comdr. R. L. Shifley was subsequently detached from VB-8 to take Comdr. Jackson's place.

On 4 May *(2) the ship anchored in MAJURO ATOLL where it detached via BuPers orders its Executive Officer, Comdr. J. M. Carson, whose place was taken by Comdr. W. B. Mechling, the former Navigator.

*(1) Ship's log, 30 April 1944.

*(2) Ship's log, 2 May 1944.



The month was a rest for the task force in the warm, pleasant harbor, with liberty parties crowding the white coral atolls. Meanwhile, the ship heard rumors of the next operation -- an invasion of the MARIANAS -- and decided it was no secret when "Tokyo Rose" predicted it on her evening broadcasts. A gentle reminder was effected as the BUNKER HILL got underway for a three-day anti-aircraft practice run and returned on 23 May.

On 6 June T.F. 58, headed by Admiral Spruance, set sail for the Jap stronghold in the MARIANAS, the capture of which would put the Empire within reach of U.S. land-based aircraft. The second day out, news of the Allied invasion of Europe was received.

A few days later the high command made a change in schedule that proved to be a strategic classic. Instead of making the first strike on 12 June, D-3 Day, it was decided to send a large fighter sweep in a day earlier. This resulted in the destruction of more than two hundred Jap planes on the ground and in the air and the runways were sufficiently cratered to assure a comparatively peaceful evening as the task force steamed in for the heavy punching.

The three-day, pre-invasion plastering of SAIPAN, TINIAN and GUAM went off with little opposition. Snoopers sought out the task group the first night, but the effort was futile and D-3 Day saw six lethal strikes roll off the deck. D-Day came, the reports of the landings were received and more strikes were flown. Late in the afternoon, the Japs brought out air opposition and the ship went to General Quarters. The four night fighters were launched, intercepted the small enemy

force and turned them away. Scuttlebutt circulated that the Jap fleet was out. On 19 June, D-Day plus four on SAIPAN, the going was still rough. At 0830 a fighter sweep to help in "busting up" runways on GUAM was launched when the flight strips were reported back in operation. The ship was tense, knowing that the Jap fleet with its effective carrier-based aircraft was maneuvering to launch from the west to attack and proceed to GUAM to refuel, rearm and continue the assault. At 1015 General Quarters was sounded.

Within thirty minutes the Hellcats were mixing it up with the Japs somewhere over the horizon. Reports drifted through the gunnery telephone system. It was nearly 1100 when the first enemy planes were reported visually at ten miles and the task group on the port quarter opened fire. Then ships of the BUNKER HILL'S screen began shooting.

Three crippled fighters were trying to land on the WASP, on the port beam, when out of a cloud darted a Judy, Jap carrier-based dive-bomber. Every gunner aboard saw it but had to hold fire to avoid hitting the damaged fighters. The Jap made a shallow dive on the WASP, dropped his bombs and pulled out. He missed and was nailed as the WASP and a nearby destroyer opened fire.

Almost simultaneously, the BUNKER HILL'S guns opened up on a pair of dive-bombers coming down on her port quarter, literally blasting them to blazing pieces, but not until the bombs were dropped. A near miss threw ugly, hot shrapnel into the ship, blasted through the splinter shields, stabbed in every direction through the skin of the ship and on the hangar deck.

1st Lieut. Gordon Stallings, USMC, at his battle station on a 40 mm. director, went down mortally wounded. G. F. Taphilias, S2c, was instantly killed on the hangar deck.

Meanwhile, fighters of the task force were wiping out the cream of Japanese naval aviation. Most of the fighting was done at high altitudes so that the first knowledge of a skirmish came as a broken, blazing Nip plane fell into the sea. Twenty minutes after the guns had quieted, an uncontrolled Jap Judy screamed out of the blue and into the sea on the BUNKER HILL'S starboard bow.

A check of sick-bay revealed that more than eighty men were wounded to some degree as a result of the near-miss, with sixteen hit badly enough to be hospitalized.

A brief resumption of the fight occurred shortly after noon when a quartet of Judys dove down out of the sun on the starboard bow, but failed to score with bomb loads.

Although enemy planes came within twenty-eight miles of the force at sunset, they failed to close and the BUNKER HILL and the task force steamed west after the Jap.

Reports indicated that more than three hundred and fifty Jap planes and their crack naval pilots had been wiped out.

The morning search of 20 June returned with negative results and the ship continued to sweat out the chase as the afternoon search made its long flight. Inter-ship communications suddenly crackled in Admiral Montgomery's flag plot. Teletypes in ready rooms began to tick off the information: "REPORTS CONTACT JAP FLEET 15-00 N, 135-25 E.

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CRS WESTERLY. SPD 20K."

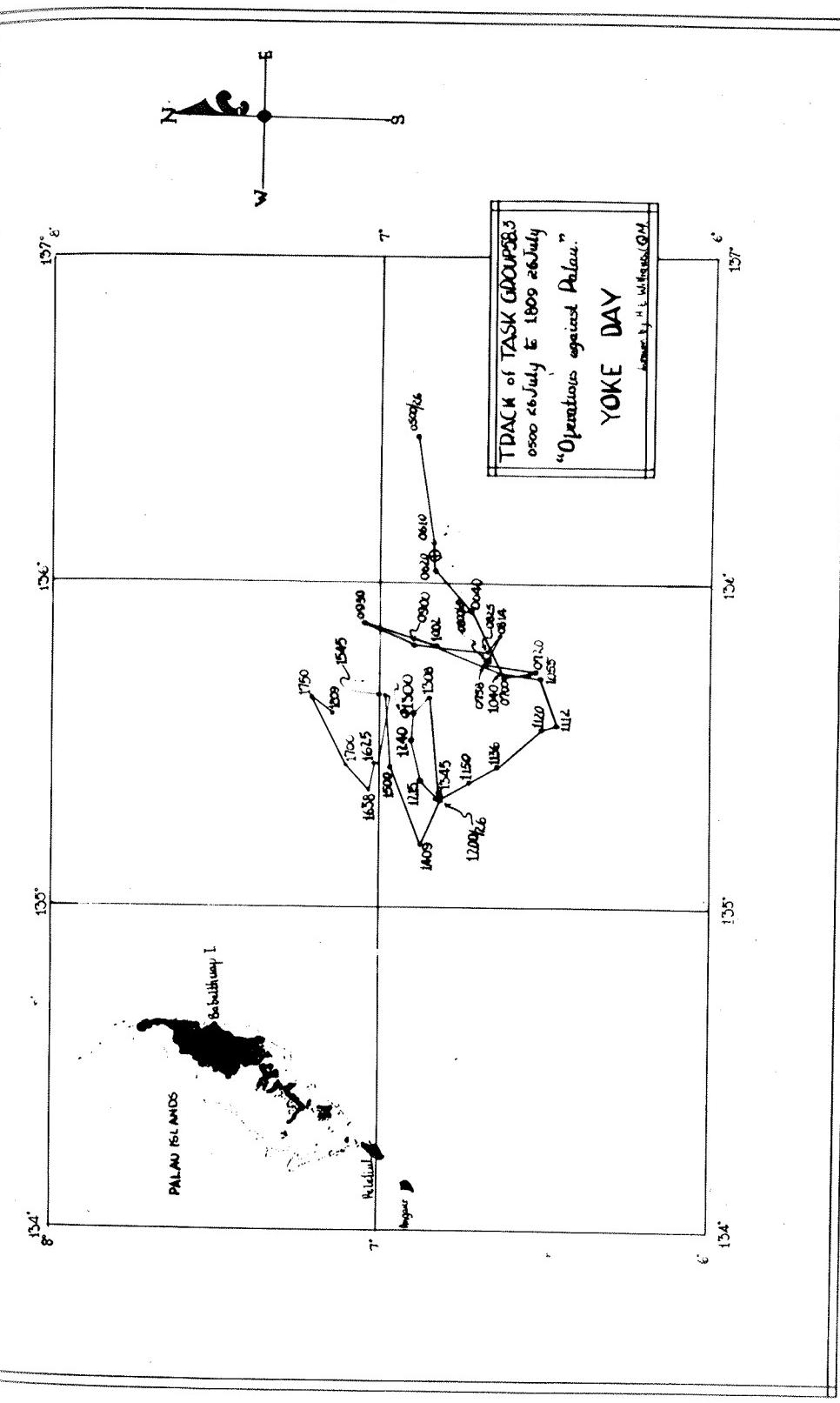
There was a prayer in every heart as the planes roared down the deck at 1611, as the strike departed to fight at extreme range and to return in darkness. At the time of the launch, the Japs were reported two hundred and fifteen miles away, but amplification of this report placed them one hundred miles beyond that point.

Darkness settled around the force and unidentified planes sent all hands to their battle stations. At 2030, the wing lights of the first returning fighters appeared and the task group turned on its lights, willing to sacrifice security of darkness to take the planes aboard.

The first three planes landed without trouble. Several more fighters landed, then a bomber from a sister carrier came aboard. His wingman followed him, but crashed into the barriers and went up on his nose, causing the prop to lodge in the deck, thus holding it at that position.

A TBF from another carrier was waved off, but came in anyway, hit the bomber's tail and crashed into the island structure. This resulted in the deaths of the Air Officer, Cmdr. W. O. Smith, U.S. Navy; J. J. Bieber, S2c; and R. A. Kaster, S1c. Despite this catastrophe, the wreckage was cleared and landing continued at 2144.

The score was totaled by intelligence officers: a Zuiko class carrier probably sunk; a Kongo class battleship hit by two thousand-pound bombs and probably one torpedo; one Chokai class cruiser hit by a one-thousand pound bomb; one destroyer left in a sinking condition.



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21 June saw the greatest mass rescue ever made of flying personnel that had been forced to bail out or make water landings the night before.

The force checked in at SAIPAN, and then headed northeast to "dust off" the PAGAN ISLANDS with a junior-size strike. Three days went peacefully by, the usual patrols and a track meet being the only items to disturb the flight deck. 27 June found the BUNKER HILL anchored in ENIWETOK LAGOON, another typical Pacific atoll.

The pause until 14 July, with the exception of a one day maneuver on 7 July, was refreshing. The ship now headed back to the MARIANAS, this time with Task Group 58.3, and on 18 July we struck GUAM and repeated until the day after the landing forces went ashore on the 21st.

25 July opened the PALAU program with a heavy duty sweep that found targets meager. Two more days of the same left PELELIU apparently ravaged. That evening headed north.

GARAPAN ANCHORAGE, at SAIPAN ROADS was something new. Off the port bow could be seen American shore batteries firing across the narrow straits to TINIAN, and the battleship's salvos sent shudders through the ship.

The next day found the BUNKER HILL underway for the VOLCANO ISLANDS, which includes TWO JIMA, on the outskirts of the Japanese empire, virtual suburb of the homeland.

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Prospects of a rugged battle seemed probable but the strikes against IWO on 4 August found no airborne opposition, although thirty-five planes were destroyed on the ground and one of the two ships in the harbor was sunk. The other was beached by the Jap skipper and left burning.

The following day strikes were sent against the nearby islands of CHICHI JIMA and HAHA JIMA, where the Air Group fought through intense AA fire to sink a pair of transports and damage four others in CHICHI harbor.

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On 9 August 1944 the BUNKER HILL with TASK GROUP 58.3 anchored in ENIWETOK LAGOON, MARSHALL ISLANDS, after striking the VOLCANO and BONIN ISLANDS on 4 and 5 August. With the exception of exercises with TASK GROUP 58.2 on the 25th and 26th of August, the ship remained at anchor until the start of the next scheduled operation on 29 August 1944.

During this period in port, the BUNKER HILL changed both flag and command. On 12 August, Rear Admiral A. E. Montgomery, U.S. Navy, Commander Carrier Division Three, hauled down his flag, and disembarked with his staff, and on 15 August, Rear Admiral G. F. Bogan, U.S. Navy, Commander Carrier Division Four, reported aboard with his staff for duty as CTG 58.2. The next day, 16 August, Captain M. R. Greer, U.S. Navy, reported aboard for duty as Commanding Officer, and on 21 August the command was turned over to him by Captain T. P. Jeter, U.S. Navy, who was detached the next day and ordered to duty as Aide and Chief-of-Staff to Commander Battleships, Pacific Fleet.

During this stay in port, the ship's company and Air Group Eight rested and recuperated. Almost daily a recreation party of officers and men was sent ashore for organized athletics, refreshment and relaxation. Each man aboard had the opportunity to get off the ship and to feel dry land under his feet two or three times before we weighed anchor and again set out to sea.

Early the morning of 29 August Task Group 58.2 sortied from ENIWETOK ATOLL and rendezvoused with Task Groups 58.1 and 58.2.

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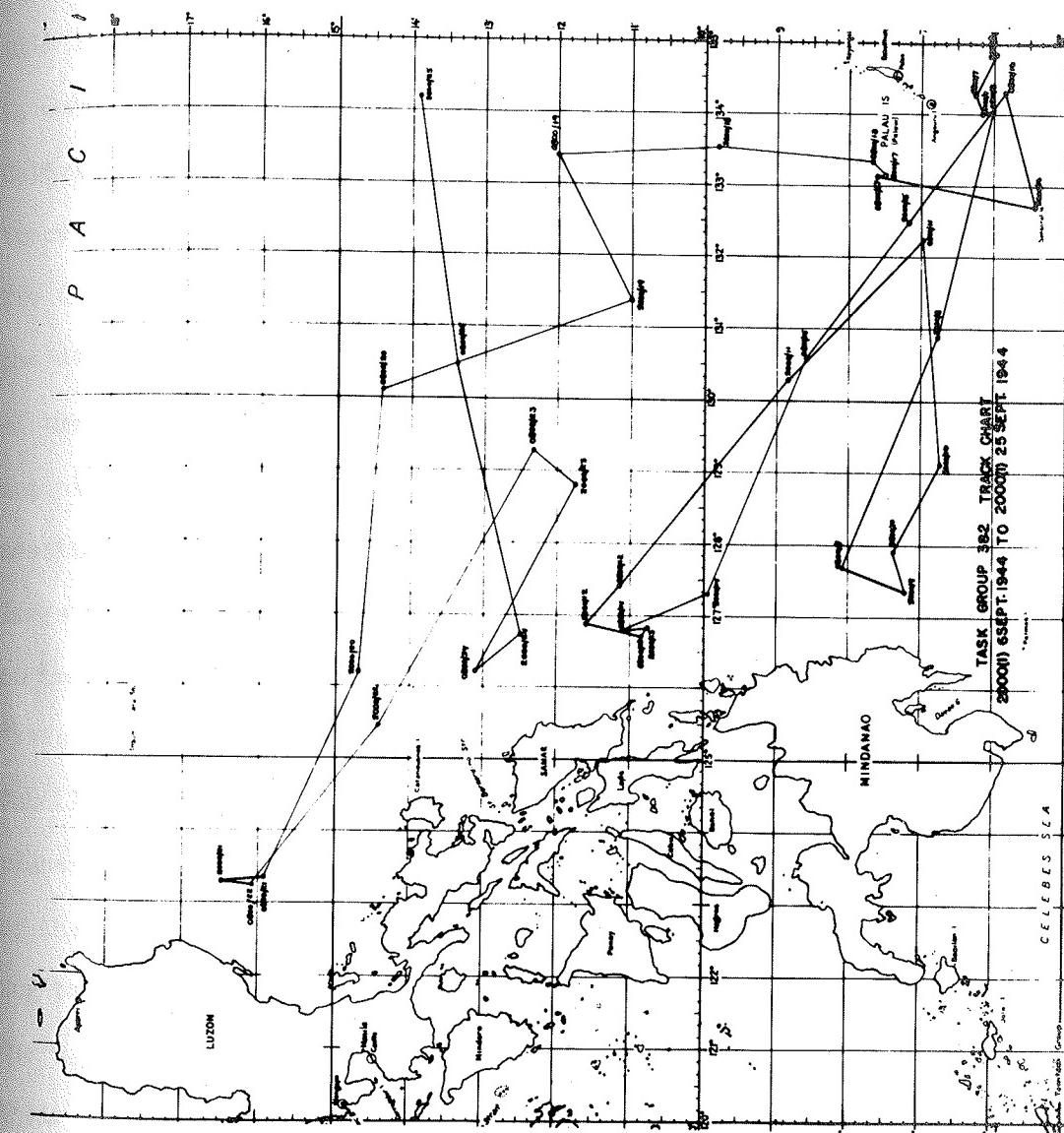
Once again the famous Fast Carrier Task Force was underway and headed for Japanese territory. The mission of the ensuing operations was to destroy enemy aircraft, shipping, and ground installations at PALAU, YAP, ULITHI and in the PHILIPPINE ISLANDS, and to support the landings of our troops in the PALAU ISLANDS. Operations were to be in accordance with Commander Fast Carrier Task Force, Pacific, Operation Order #10-44, Commander Western Pacific Task Forces Operation Plan #14-44, and Commander Task Group 38.2 Operation Order #2-44.

En route the task group conducted exercises in gunnery, fighter-direction, and combat maneuvers, and the air groups staged simulated attacks on the ships of the group.

On 31 August the task force transferred to the Third Fleet, and now the BUNKER HILL was the flagship of Task Group 38.2.

2 September 1944 was a day long to be remembered by many of the officers and men of the ship who had recently reported aboard, for at 0828 of that day Neptunis Rex and his Royal Party came aboard and held court over the lowly polywogs. Of the punishments meted out to those guilty of the crime of never having crossed the Equator, it can be said that no favoritism was shown, for seamen second class and members of the Admiral's staff shared alike in the humility of the initiation into the ranks of esteemed and honored Shellbacks.

Early that same morning, with the first flight operations of the day, two dive-bombers with fighter escort took off and headed for



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MANUS ISLAND in the ADMIRALTY GROUP. At 1629 they landed aboard with guests, two distinguished visitors, who, by their inspiration to the crew, contributed much to the fine showing of the BUNKER HILL in the forthcoming operation. They were the Honorable Artemus L. Gates, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Air, and his Aide, Captain B. W. Wright, U.S. Navy. Throughout the two weeks that these men were aboard, the entire crew and air group performed to the utmost of their ability in order to demonstrate to these guests the efficiency and effectiveness of carrier operations. At all hours of the day or night Mr. Gates and Captain Wright would be seen observing all phases of the ship's activities. They would be seen in the messing compartments at chow time, interested in the feeding of the large crew, and in the food that was served. They would be seen aft on the flight deck at the landing signals platform watching the LSO "sweat in" the returning planes. They would be in CIC watching the functioning of fighter direction in the interception of unidentified planes, or listening in on the strike frequency to hear the reports of the planes over the targets. They would be on the bridge watching the conn of the ship, and in flag plot observing direction of the task group. Indeed, no part of the ship's activities escaped their attention. By being everywhere and showing so much interest in everything, their inspiration to the crew was invaluable.

On the 6th of September the task force had arrived at striking distance, and there had been no indication that its presence had been

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detected. At 1257 a fighter sweep was put into the air and the attack was on. The sweep encountered no airborne opposition, and found no large ships. The sixteen fighters launched from the BUNKER HILL set fire to eight sampans and strafed shore installations. All planes returned safely and sustained no damage from enemy anti-aircraft fire.

At 0600 the next morning the attack continued. During this day the BUNKER HILL established a new record of $113\frac{1}{2}$ tons of bombs dropped in a single day by planes from a single carrier, *(1). This was accomplished by five strike groups being put into the air. Planes were over PALAU every daylight hour. Anti-aircraft fire became more accurate as the enemy crews gained experience, and five planes returned to the ship damaged, however, no losses were sustained.

On the 8th the attacks continued, but only two strike groups from the BUNKER HILL hit PALAU. Again no losses were sustained. In the afternoon the attacks ceased, and the task group turned toward MINDANAO in the PHILIPPINE ISLANDS, the next day's target.

On the 9th of September five strikes were sent against MINDANAO with the weight of the attack centered on DAVAO and the surrounding area. There still was no organized enemy airborne resistance, but a Judy was shot down over the target. The anti-aircraft fire was accurate and intense, and one of the dive bombers from Air Group Eight was shot down over the airfield at DAVAO. The pilot, Lieut.

*(1) U.S.S. BUNKER HILL Action Report of 29 Aug. to 30 Sept. 1944.
Part II.

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A. D. Jones, USNR, 243242, and the gunner, W. L. Oliver, 662 21 13, ARMLc, USNR, were seen to parachute and land close to the field.

Lieut. Jones was one of the ablest and best liked pilots of the air group. He had early in the war volunteered to fly for England, and had been a fighter pilot during the Battle for Britain. When this country became involved in the war, he was released from his duty in England, and enlisted in the Naval Reserve.

Attacks on MINDANAO were continued the next day, but only during the morning. In the afternoon, the task group headed for the rendezvous area and the next day fueled from the oiler group. The attacks on DAVAO were, perhaps, the high point of the operation, for the damage done to shore installations and shipping was a tribute to the Navy's pin-point bombing technique.

After fueling, the task force headed north for targets in the PHILIPPINES. On the 12th at 0845 the U.S.S. MARSHALL sank a small boat after retrieving from it forty-four (44) Japanese prisoners and several documents. They were survivors from the NATORI, Japanese cruiser that had been sunk by a United States submarine. The prisoners had been at sea in an open boat for twenty-seven (27) days, and were in fairly good physical condition. *(1)

A fighter sweep and three strikes were launched that day against LEYTE and CEBU. For one of the few times of the entire operation fighter direction had a chance to account for enemy aircraft. Two Bettys were splashed by the CAP, one by Task Group 38.2 and the other by one of the other groups.

*(1) Ship's Log, U.S.S. BUNKER HILL, 12 Sept. 1944.

On the 13th our planes encountered the first organized air opposition of the operation, but in a short time control of the air was established, and strikes were able to carry out their missions without interference. Also on this day the only submarine contacts of the operation were made. The anti-submarine patrol sighted three unidentified submarines in the area of the force. The subs crash-dived, and no further contact was made with them.

On the 14th the task force was fifty miles south-east of SAMAR and during the morning attacks were continued, but in the afternoon the force retired and headed back towards PALAU. On the 16th a rendezvous was made with the oiler group. In the morning prior to the fueling of the BUNKER HILL, the Honorable A. L. Gates and his Aide, Captain B. W. Wright took off as passengers in Helldivers and were flown to BIAK.

The landings in the PALAU invasion commenced early the morning of the 17th and Task Force 38 was there to protect and supply air cover for the amphibious forces. A thorough job of softening up the beaches was done, and support missions were flown in strength during the entire day. Six missions were flown from the BUNKER HILL. By nightfall the beach-heads were well secured, and the absence of enemy air power in the area permitted the Fast Carrier Task Force to head north once more to disrupt the enemy at the source of his air power that might have been used against the landing forces. The PALAUS were left under the protection of the escort carrier groups,

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and the fast carriers headed for LUZON.

The 21st saw the renewal of attacks on the PHILIPPINE stronghold of the Jap. For the second time in the month organized air opposition was encountered, but again it was but a matter of minutes until control of the air was established and maintained for the balance of the operation. The next day the strikes continued, but late in the morning a typhoon threatening to the north necessitated the cancellation of the remaining strikes.

After fueling on the 23rd the Task Group returned to the LUZON area and continued the attack on the 24th. This last day of strikes of the month was concentrated against shipping in CORON BAY. Three strikes were launched by the BUNKER HILL against shipping targets, and one fighter sweep against airborne resistance and ground installations.

After completing operations on the 24th Task Group 38.2 retired toward the MARIANAS, reaching SAIPAN the morning of the 28th. Anchors were dropped in SAIPAN ROADS, and replenishment of ammunition started. By afternoon of the following day loading was completed, and the group got underway for ULITHI.

The accomplishments of the BUNKER HILL'S air group, Air Group Eight, for the period between the 6th and the 24th of September were outstanding, particularly against enemy shipping. Thirteen enemy ships were sunk, totaling 44,600 tons, eleven ships, totaling 48,150 tons were heavily damaged and probably sunk, and ten ships, total-

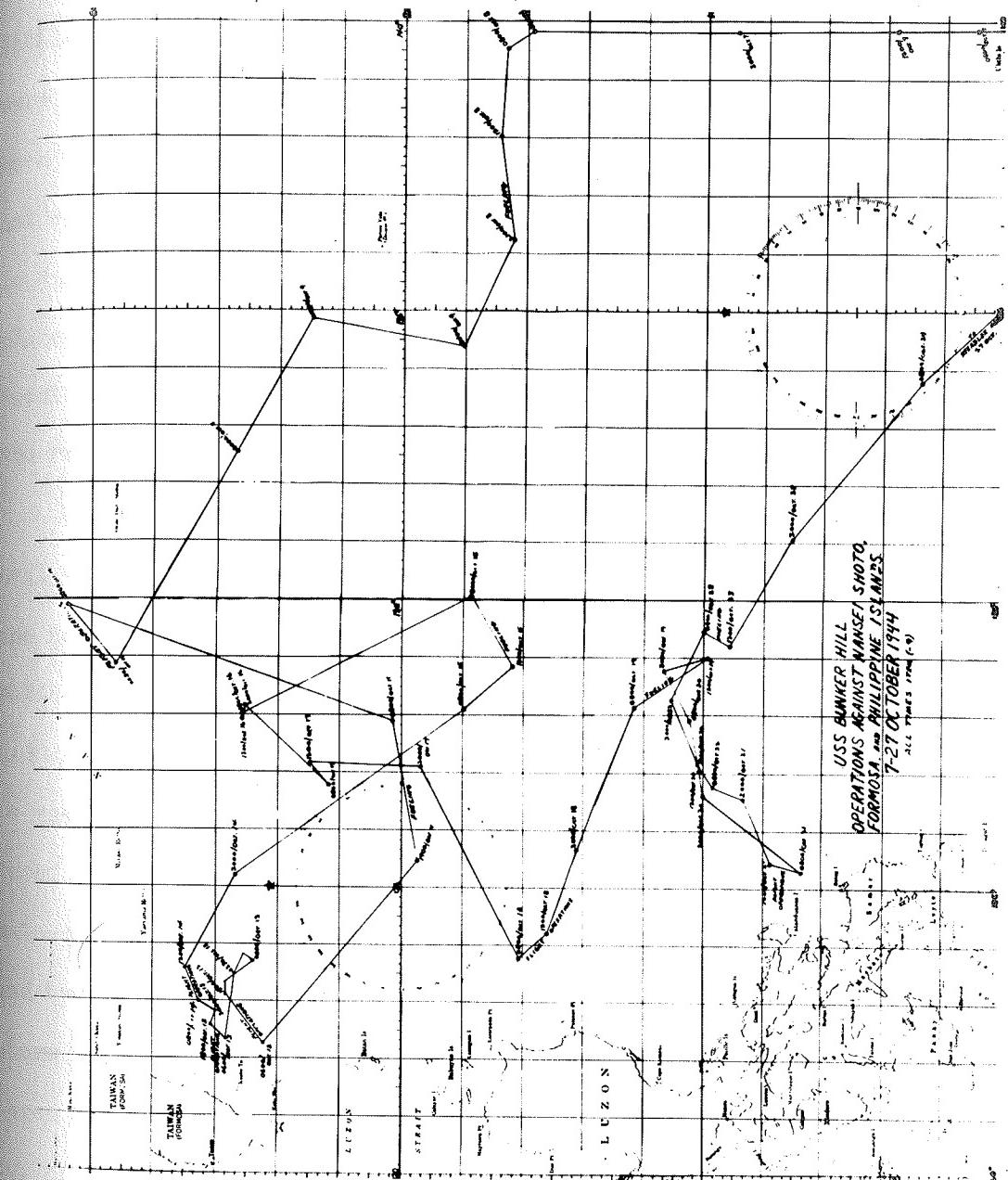
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ing 19,100 tons were damaged. In addition, many small craft including luggers, sampans, barges, tugs, and fishing boats were damaged, or destroyed. At least twenty nine (29) of these small craft were sunk or destroyed. All of the classified tonnage was found in the PHILIPPINE area, only small craft were found in the PALAU ISLANDS, *(1).

Although generally speaking the enemy's efforts in air opposition were meager, the air group destroyed thirty-seven (37) planes in the air, and fifty-one (51) on the ground against a loss to themselves of nine planes, two pilots, and two airmen, *(2).

*(1) Action Report of U.S.S. BUNKER HILL of 29 Aug. to 30 Sept. 1944.
Part IV.

*(2) Action Report of U.S.S. BUNKER HILL of 29 Aug. to 30 Sept. 1944.
Part V.



ULITHI LAGOON had been taken from the Japs in the middle days of September, but already it was a full-fledged fleet anchorage when the BUNKER HILL sailed into it on 1 October 1944. Although few warships were present the place was teeming with activity. No sooner had the hook been dropped, than Rear Admiral G. F. Bogan shifted his flag and staff from the BUNKER HILL to the INTREPID. Then followed the loading of supplies and ammunition, re-provisioning, taking on replacement aircraft, meetings of air group commanders, briefing, and "scuttlebutt." Something big was up--westward, around the PHILIPPINES. "No recreation on MOG MOG ISLAND, boys, there's a war on."

Early Tuesday morning, 3 October, word was received that a tropical hurricane was heading toward ULITHI ATOLL. ULITHI lies about one hundred miles from YAP, the birthplace of the terrific typhoons which sweep the coasts of CHINA and the PHILIPPINE ISLANDS. ULITHI LAGOON was no place to be, so the ships weighed anchor and shoved off to meet the force of the hurricane at sea. The BUNKER HILL was battened down tight--she suffered no damage. The small craft that remained in the lagoon were buffeted around severely, some were damaged, and two ammunition barges were sunk. On the following afternoon the storm had subsided sufficiently to allow the ships to return. After three more days of loading and provisioning, the BUNKER HILL steamed out of ULITHI in company with the BIRMINGHAM and RENO, escorted by the destroyers, DARTCH and HEALY--destination: Task Force 38 to join up with Task Group 38.2. On board, all briefed and ready to go, was

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Air Group EIGHT, which was soon to enhance its already favorable name as a fighting unit.

The BUNKER HILL joined Task Group 38.2 on 8 October. After refueling, the task group proceeded toward the NANSEI SHOTO to launch air strikes against OKINAWA JIMA, the same OKINAWA that was to claim many American lives six months later. The task group was made up of the carriers INTREPID, flagship of Rear Admiral Bogan, BUNKER HILL and HANCOCK; the light carriers CABOT and INDEPENDENCE; the battleships IOWA and NEW JERSEY; the light cruisers VINCENNES, HOUSTON and MIAMI; the anti-aircraft cruisers SAN DIEGO and OAKLAND, and eighteen destroyers.

The approach to OKINAWA was perfect — the Japs didn't suspect a thing until the early morning of 10 October when the first wave of Hellcats, Helldivers and Avengers hit them. The weather was excellent. The Japs were caught flat-footed; no organized air opposition was met and the flak over the target was spotty and ineffective. OKINAWA was hit all that day and no serious casualties were suffered. The Japs suffered as follows: two small submarines sunk, two submarines badly damaged, one thousand ton AK sunk, seven sampans sunk, one thousand ton AO sunk, one small landing craft sunk, two fuel lighters sunk, one small AK sunk, one six thousand ton AK sunk, one fifteen hundred ton AO damaged, one thousand ton AK damaged, one medium AK set afire, two small AK's heavily damaged, five sampans damaged, and one three thousand ton AO damaged. Yontan San Airfield was hit hard,

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its runways were cratered and left non-operational. The town of ITOMAN, OKINAWA was left ablaze. During the day, twenty-five enemy planes were destroyed.

Having done a good day's work, the task group headed south to refuel before making the run on FORMOSA. By this time, the Japs knew something was in the wind, and they began to tighten up. The run on FORMOSA was not going to be easy. All the way in, on the night of 12 October the Japs kept up a continuous attack. The Japanese lamp-lighter was on the prowl—flares dropped all around the task group, several landing on the BUNKER HILL to burn furiously for a moment, and others being shot down as the versatile 20MM guns opened up on this new type of target. Fortunately, the Japs could not coordinate the flares with their torpedo bombers. Eye-witnesses stated that a Kate crossed the BUNKER HILL over the forward twin 5"/38 guns. The boys down below swore that two loud thumps were heard below the water-line. Later in drydock, the Chief Engineer discovered two large dents in the side of the ship, dents that were made by dud torpedoes.

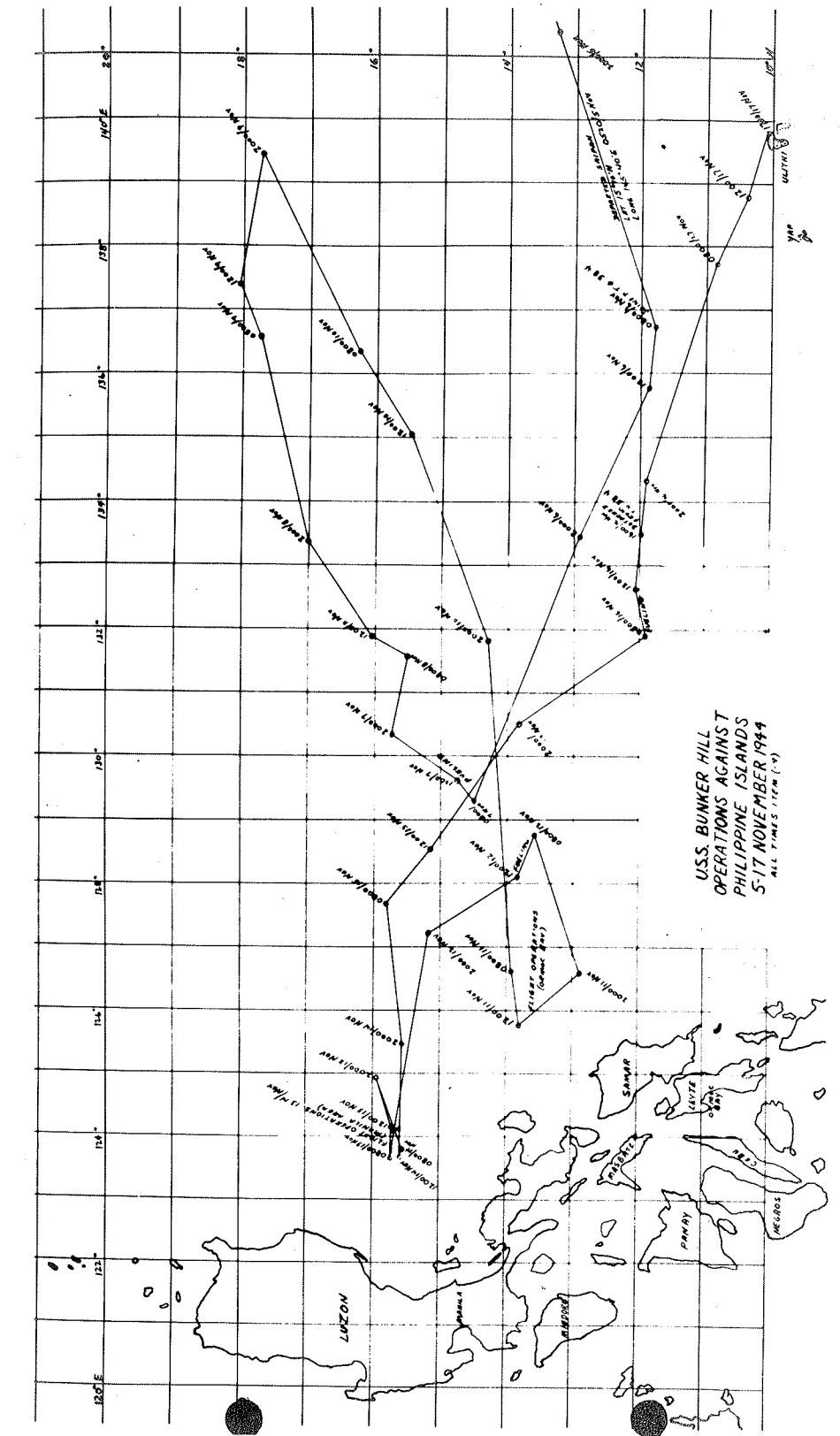
The weather around Formosa was terrible: low clouds made ideal kamikaze weather—but the kamikaze corps was just going through boot training about this time. Deo gratias! As it turned out, the air strikes against Formosa raised hell with the Jap air force during the day; and the Jap air force raised hell with American nerves during the night, with continuous flare-dropping. Formosa was raked over, but good, on the 12th, again on the 13th, and still again on the 14th. Air Group Eight

and the BUNKER HILL left FORMOSA — and left a friend. His name was Lieut. (jg) N. W. "Red" Imal, USNR, one of the most colorful personalities on the ship. He never flew without his stogie, an immense cigar which "Red" kept clamped in his mouth at a defiant angle. "Red" loved to "smoke out" the Japs, and surprisingly enough he always did. He went into his dive over the mat on FORMOSA, and never came out. No one knows what happened; everyone knew that a swell guy didn't come back. The exploits of devil-may-care "Red" were famous throughout the ship; his loss was felt by all hands.

When the task group left FORMOSA to go south and refuel, it was common knowledge that the Japs were worried. Consequently, no one was too surprised that night when word was received that the Jap fleet was on the high seas — to the north of Task Group 38.2. Future schedules for attacks against LUZON were postponed. The hunt was on!

The next two days saw a feverish search for units of the Jap fleet. Planes were searching, madly searching — results — negative. The Jap fleet, if it really was out, could not be near 38.2. It was rather a disillusioned task group that gave up the search and headed south to attack LUZON. The Jap fleet would have been a real killing ... The LUZON strike was a picnic: no air opposition, meager flak. LUZON was under attack all day the 18th. That night the task group left to refuel before going south to SAN BERNARDINO STRAIT to begin softening-up operations for the invasion of the PHILIPPINES.

On 21 October, CEBU was hit. The task group was steaming in an area northeast of SAN BERNARDINO STRAIT — about fifty miles away. The following day 38.2 stood by in strategic support of the landings in the



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PHILIPPINE ISLANDS. Then the BUNKER HILL was detached from Task Group 38.2 with orders to proceed to MANUS ISLAND. The ship arrived at MANUS on October 27, low on supplies and ammunition. Air Group EIGHT was detached to go back to the States for a rest and re-organization. The air group had taken a beating; the fliers were weary and had earned a rest.

On 1 November, the BUNKER HILL left MANUS and steamed toward SAIPAN. There Air Group FOUR came aboard and the ship joined Task Group 38.4. On 5 November, the task group left SAIPAN to strike Japanese shipping off the west coast of LEYTE. Reports came in of Jap shipping in the area near ORMOC BAY, LEYTE ISLAND. On the 11th carrier planes found the ships and sank one large destroyer, one destroyer, two destroyer escorts and four attack transports. Later searches revealed nothing, and that night the task group left LEYTE to refuel before proceeding to LUZON. Strikes were launched against LUZON on 13 November, the principal targets being Clark Field, Nichol Field, Cavite, and shipping in Manila Bay.

The strikes were continued on the 14th and on the 15th the task group left to refuel; the following day the BUNKER HILL left the task group with orders to proceed to ULITHI LAGOON for further routing to the Navy Yard, Puget Sound, Washington. Stateside duty at last! After sixteen months of continuous duty without an over-haul, the BUNKER HILL was going home. Going home proudly, without a scratch, yet having participated in every major operation in the

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Pacific from the RABAUL campaign to the PHILIPPINE invasion. The BUNKER HILL put into her berth in the Bremerton Navy Yard on December 7th in the afternoon, exactly three years after the Pearl Harbor attack. This was to be her first Navy yard overhaul since commissioning and it promised to be a period of recuperation sorely needed by both the ship and its personnel.

During the next thirty-two days the ship was in dry dock it received its share of chippers, painters, welders and the various specialists that the yard has to offer. But out of the confusion that appeared to be present several important changes were being made in the ship's structure and fire power.

A port side flight deck catapult was installed in lieu of the athwartship hangar deck catapult, which had proved unsatisfactory in actual operations.

The island structure was rearranged to move air plot from the navigation platform to the O2 deck. The former space was converted into the chart house annex. The space occupied by CIC became the Admiral's sea quarters. CIC was re-located on the O2 deck and flag plot was enlarged by extending the island structure forward. These alterations were necessary to provide more working space for equipment and personnel.

Provision was made for universal bomb stowage. This was to facilitate the handling and stowing of bombs by allowing bombs of all sizes to be stowed in any of the bomb stowage spaces.

Two gallery deck spaces were converted into ready rooms to provide

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facilities for the increased complement of the new air group.

The anti-aircraft fire power of the ship was increased by the installation of nine 40 mm. quadruple mounts. Four were mounted on the port side; five on the starboard side. One additional quad was mounted on the fantail and one such mount was removed from the flag bridge level forward to permit the enlargement of flag plot. At the completion of the overhaul, the ship had twelve 40 mm. quadruple mounts controlled by the Mark 37 main battery director.

While the business of overhauling the ship proceeded, the first leave party returned on the 27th after twenty-one days of rest and the second party left on the 28th for seventeen days.

The ship was moved from the dry dock and moored to pier six for the completion of the overhaul on 8 January 1945. The work was proceeding according to plan and the chippers and painters succeeded in making life unpleasant for those living aboard.

The ship weighed anchor on 16 January and steamed to Orchard Point, Puget Sound, to continue loading stores and ammunition. Three days later, trial runs were held and the ship returned to the yard and moored at pier five. The following day she again cast off and was officially on her way to Alameda.

Two days of smooth sailing, berthing down the new draft of men and officers, one gunnery practice and one abandon ship drill brought the ship into San Francisco Bay. She moored at NAS, Alameda, and working parties started immediately to bring aboard more ammunition and stores. The new air group, CVG EIGHTY-FOUR, reported aboard for

duty. Captain G. A. Seitz, U.S. Navy, came aboard to relieve Captain M. R. Greer, U.S. Navy, as commanding officer. At 1613 on the 24th, the BUNKER HILL again turned her bow for the west and started on the first leg of her trip to TOKYO.

The next four days were filled with the business of putting the ship into a condition of fighting readiness. From General Quarters in the early morning until movies at night, the time was consumed by gunnery practice, abandon ship drills, fire drills and securing the stores for sea. The new hands overcame their seasickness and everyone settled down to prepare themselves for the grim task that lay ahead.

On 28 January the BUNKER HILL moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor,

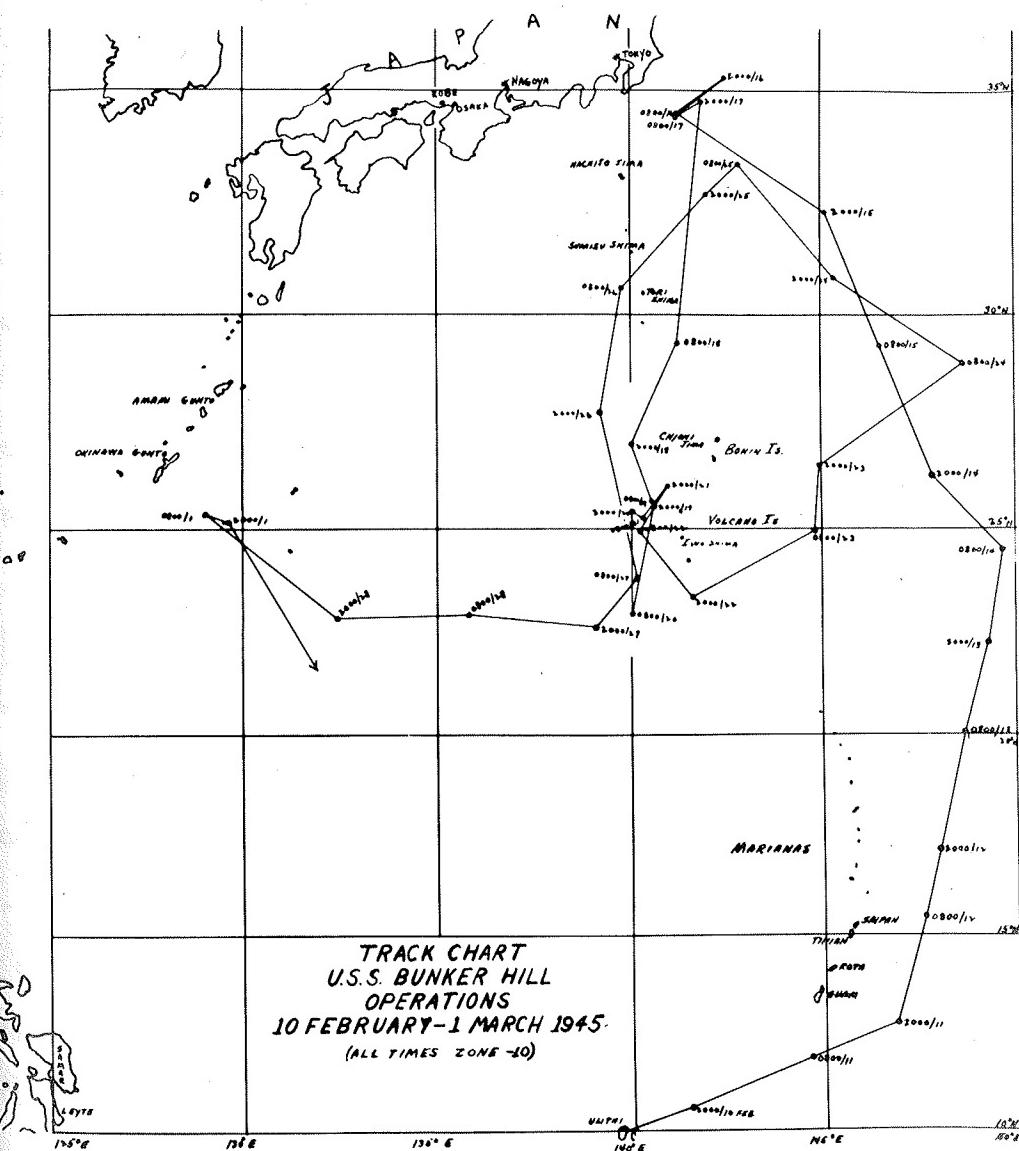
T.H.

Scuttlebutt was rampant as the ship pulled out of Pearl and headed west early the following morning. She was bound for ULITHI and the barren island of MOG-MOG, but from there on it was anyone's guess — and everyone guessed...AUSTRALIA, MARSHALLS, INDIA, TOKYO, ALASKA.

The odds against TOKYO grew less and less as the ship made her westing and by the time she reached ULITHI the destination was known from bow to fantail.

There were more preparations to make, more rehearsals for the big show which now had become a certainty. There was a tense atmosphere throughout the entire atoll. This was it. The enemy's home grounds.

The ship's company had known for some time that the BUNKER HILL was to be the flagship of the force, so when Vice Admiral Marc Mitscher came aboard, nobody was particularly surprised. It was a simple



Eight bells...Commander First Carrier Task Force," then "Make all preparations for getting under way" and the BUNKER HILL was off for TOKYO.

On that morning, 10 February, one of the greatest naval forces of all time set forth as a unit. As far as the eye could see there were ships. The radar screens in CIC were full of blips which became orderly formations as the destroyer screens closed around the larger and slower units. Even the most calloused soul aboard felt a thrill of pride as he looked in every direction and saw the fast carrier task force steaming toward the Land of the Setting Sun.

Since this was to be the big show, training exercises were conducted at fever pitch during the time it took to make the run to the north. Even routine patrols took on added significance and everyone was on the alert for anything that might arise.

The evening of 15 February found the force making a highspeed run-in. It was pitch black with "darken ship" in full force. Radios and transmitters were secured while the monitors listened for enemy transmissions that would indicate that the force's cat was out of the bag. Silence. Even the radars were in a standby condition to insure the security of the operation. The Captain that night told the ship's company on the IMC where the BUNKER HILL was going, what she was going to do, and the Chaplain led all hands in prayer.

Reveille was early on the 16th...about 0300. Fighter sweeps took off before dawn to clear the way for the later strikes. It was a quiet day for the force, although it was ready for anything. Not a single enemy plane approached the formation. A few bogies started in, but

were detected early enough to be splashed by the CAP many miles away.

Weather was very poor, with frequent and heavy rain squalls. The later strikes were called off when visibility made flying an instrument proposition.

On the 17th the weather conditions were worse than the day before. The early strikes went off as scheduled, but the rest had to be cancelled. At 1600 Admiral Mitscher ordered the force to retire.

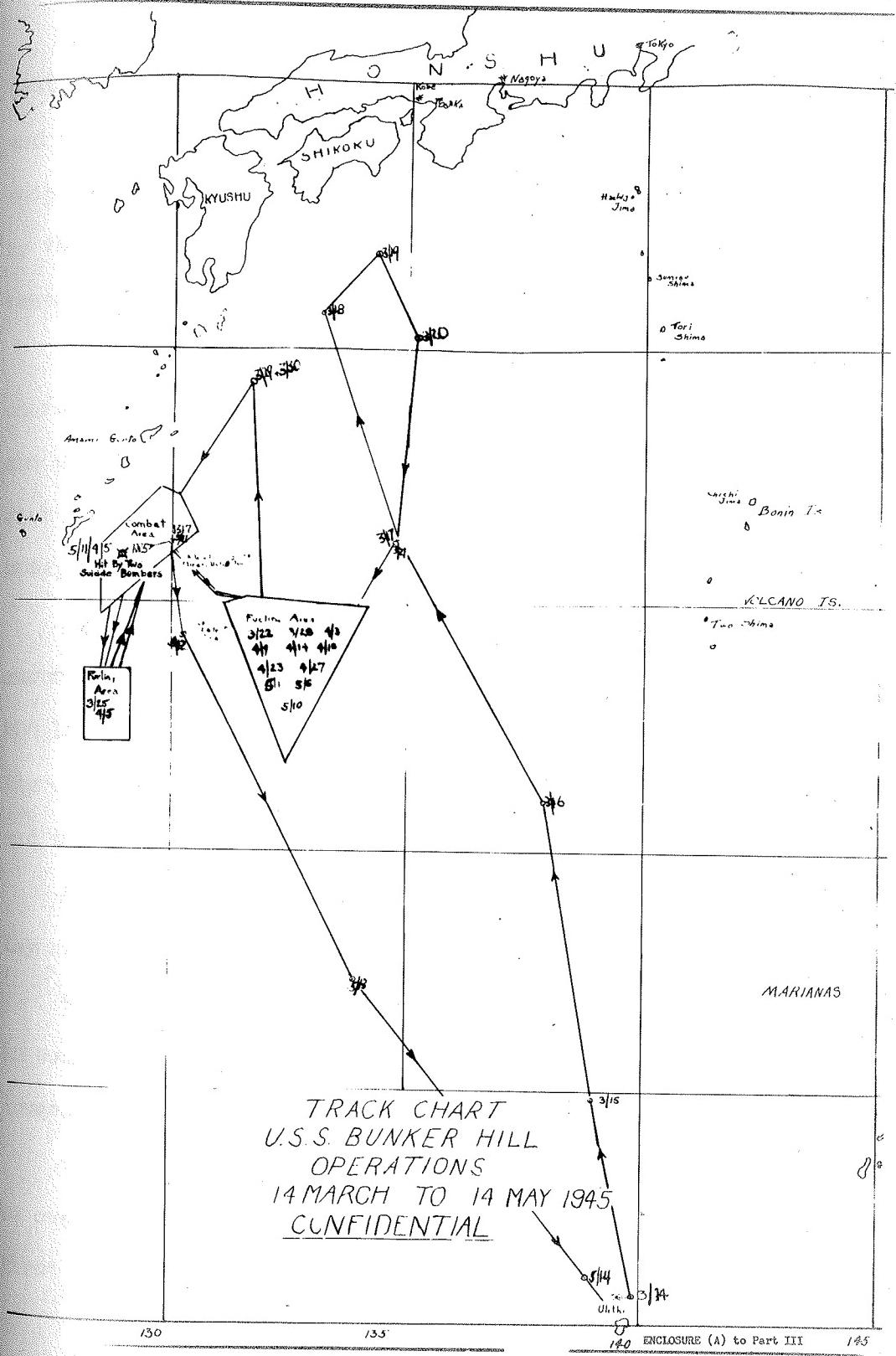
The next operation was the support of landings on Iwo Jima, which was reached on 19 February. Again the sweeps and strikes took off to make rocket, strafing and bombing runs on the beaches of Iwo that were, a few hours later, to see the landings of American troops. Throughout the days that followed, air support was furnished for the troops ashore even though foul weather made air operations extremely tricky. On several occasions the returning planes would find only a heavy squall where their navigation told them the ship would be. "There's a clear spot about 20 miles east," the pilots would call in, and the ship would have to go out and recover her brood in the open area, often suspending recovery operations while the planes gained altitude to find another hole in the soup.

25 February found the BUNKER HILL once again in the TOKYO area after a rough run-in due to heavy weather. The force was obliged to proceed at sixteen knots in order to arrive with all units present. Again bad weather hampered operations and caused several strikes to be cancelled. And again no air opposition was encountered over the force. A few planes rose to meet the sweeps and strikes sent in to the TOKYO

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area, but were knocked down shortly after take-off. Unfavorable weather over the target area caused cancellation of strikes against NAGOYA.

The force headed south to the fueling rendezvous on the 27th, where all units were topped off and rearmed for the next fracas. This time it was not to be the Jap home islands again, but OKINAWA, where the BUNKER HILL was to spend many days and weeks of continuous activity. 1 March was the date of the first attack on OKINAWA, and the BUNKER HILL'S last for a few days. Fighter sweeps, photo missions and bombing attacks were made on that day, and at 1530 she changed course to the south, bound for ULITHI and a little rest and relaxation on MOG-MOG.



Upon returning from TOKYO after having given the Japs an historic beating, T.F. 58 steamed through the coral reefs guarding ULITHI ATOLL and "dropped the hook." The Air Group had begun to feel at home on the ship, the new members of the crew no longer felt confused and baffled by the complexity of the carrier and everyone felt elated at having taken part in the TOKYO raid.

But preparations began almost as soon as the BUNKER HILL was anchored to replenish her supplies of bombs, fuel, airplanes, ammunition and other essential materials. "Scuttlebutt" grew by leaps and bounds each day as to where the next operation would be — INDO-CHINA, FORMOSA, CHINA or JAPAN.

During the days spent at the anchorage in ULITHI, a certain amount of recreation was given the crew in the form of a trip to MOG-MOG ISLAND — a delightful spot unfrequented by peacetime tourists. There was sufficient beach available for everyone who cared to swim and warm beer was on hand in huge quantities.

On the night of 12 March, the RANDOLPH was hit by a bomb as she lay at anchor a few hundred yards offshore.

On the morning of the 14th, the BUNKER HILL weighed anchor and in company with other units of T.F. 58, started what was to be the longest and most eventful cruise of her career.

The Air Group immediately began a period of intensive training to overcome loss of practice during the ten-day stay at ULITHI. The first afternoon out, during a simulated strafing attack, a TBM disin-

tegrated over the ship.

On the early morning of 18 March, the first strike against naval and industrial centers in KYUSHU was made. Particular stress was laid on disrupting the Japanese air forces in that area. KURE NAVAL BASE was kept under surveillance to determine if any major fleet units might be present. The BUNKER HILL was back in stride again and operations proceeded smoothly, except for a near miss by a five-hundred pound Jap bomb which exploded close aboard to starboard and sent water over the flight deck.

The word got around that a landing was to be made soon by our troops in the NANSEI SHOTO ISLANDS, and that KEREMA RETTO and OKINAWA were to be the specific places. This was confirmed when it was announced that the efforts of the Task Group and of the ship would be directed to prepare for and support landings on OKINAWA on 1 April, "Love Day." For eight strenuous days preceding Love Day, the ship launched strikes against airfields and small craft shipping in the OKINAWA area. The amount of resistance from the Japs appeared to be light, although many well-defended sections of the island were revealed by photo plane coverage.

At last, on Sunday, 1 April, Love Day, H-hour was at hand and the ship's flight deck resembled LaGuardia Field during rush hours. The strike schedule called for thirteen *(1) separate attacks from the BUNKER HILL in addition to helping maintain a CAP over the Task Group.

*(1) Op-Order 2-45.

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The results of the landings kept trickling in from returning airmen -- all appeared to be going exceptionally well; the Japs weren't offering their usual fanatical resistance.

For the next few weeks operations settled into a very routine system -- four days of strikes and sweeps against the Japs on OKINAWA and surrounding islands and then fuel, rearm and provision from the service fleet for a day; after that, four more days of action. The days were routine even though they might include five or more periods of General Quarters, Torpedo Defense, a Kamikaze attack on ships in the Task Group and a night launching to intercept bogies. In spite of the hazards created by the suicide planes, the BUNKER HILL and AIR GROUP EIGHTY-FOUR were never out of the thick of things due to enemy action. Progress by the Army and Marine troops on OKINAWA had slowed down to nearly a stop toward the last of April and increasingly heavy demands were made upon the ship to support ground actions in addition to neutralizing and destroying enemy air strength on other islands of the NANSEI SHOTO. On 7 April, all available torpedo planes from AIR GROUP EIGHTY-FOUR joined others from T.G. 58.3 carriers and were sent north through rain and squalls to intercept the Jap battleship YAMATO. Excitement was at fever pitch on the BUNKER HILL while everyone waited to hear the results. What did happen is now well known, and never again were the Japs willing to risk sending major units of their fleet out of hiding in home ports.

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KYUSHU continued to send out Kamikaze planes in a never-ending stream. These suicide pilots continued to harass the ships and although nearly all were intercepted or shot down too soon to accomplish their mission, the few who did get through usually caused serious damage. The BUNKER HILL shot down eighteen planes *(1) on this cruise with the ship 's guns, and was credited with several others which probably would have struck nearby units. The gun crews did a magnificent job of repelling and shooting down enemy planes, in spite of the extremely long hours of "One-Easy" and Torpedo Defense sessions.

Nevertheless, the business of running the ship went on as usual. A sailor could still get a pair of shoes repaired in the cobbler shop, or buy a gedunk, and get mail from home or mimeograph a memo. The ship was simply "getting on with the war."

Things were about like this on 11 May, too. Early morning General Quarters had been held, a dawn strike had been sent off the ship to OKINAWA and for the first time in weeks, fresh fruit was served for breakfast, as the ALDEBARAN had brought provisions the preceding afternoon. Occasional bogies were reported during the morning, even requiring a brief General Quarters, but they soon disappeared; conditions returned to normal and another strike was about to be sent to OKINAWA. But, at 1005, what the crew of the BUNKER HILL thought would never happen — did happen! The good luck had run out. Through the thin overcast dove a Jap "Zeke" to crash among the parked planes aft on the

*(1) Gunnery Action Report.

flight deck. Its bomb went through the side of the ship and exploded outboard forward of the port quarter. Immediately after the parked planes on deck had caught fire and before the general alarm had time to be sounded, a second Jap "Judy" came streaking in, and, after dropping it five-hundred pound bomb amidship on the flight deck, crashed into the base of the island structure. The Air Officer, Cmdr. G. J. Frauenheim, USNR, and his assistant, Lt. Cmdr. P. H. Clark, Jr., USNR, both stationed at primary fly, received slight flesh wounds when struck by flying fragments torn from the suicide aircraft. Instantly the hangar deck and after gallery deck became an inferno from the explosion and burning gasoline. When the situation seemed to be at its worst, a third Jap came in at 1025 low and fast, boring directly for the stricken BUNKER HILL, but was shot down while one-half mile away. This kill was made by the starboard 40 mm. battery. Incidentally, these were the last shots to be fired at an enemy plane by the ship in World War II.

The crew was shaken by the sudden blow the ship had received, but there was no confusion. Within three minutes after the first blaze started, water was on the fire and for the next several hours all hands who were able to manned fire-fighting and damage control equipment. Burning planes were jettisoned, decks and bulkheads cut away, fuel oil pumped out and tons of water used to combat the progress of the fire. Every effort was made to steer the ship into the wind to provide fresh air for the men below decks, who were being overcome by smoke sucked down by ventilation ducts.

Many crewmen who had jumped into the sea were picked up by circling destroyers. The USS WILKES-BARRE distinguished herself by coolly, fear-

lessly coming alongside, making available her much-needed fire fighting equipment and removing many of the wounded.

All afternoon anxious eyes were searching the sky for further attacks by Jap planes — the black smoke from the burning ship could have guided the Japs for miles.

Rapidly the casualties began to mount. By mid-afternoon the estimate was that "about two-hundred and fifty were dead," but this figure proved far too low when compartments in the gallery deck that had previously been inaccessible were opened. Few were seriously wounded; either a man escaped injury altogether or was killed outright. As the sun set on 11 May 1945, the gallant BUNKER HILL was a grim vessel indeed as she headed back to the safety of ULITHI — battered and scorched. Nevertheless, she was still a fighting ship — most of her guns could fire.

The next morning the BOUNTIFUL came alongside to take the most seriously wounded aboard, and return a few survivors who were picked up from other ships. That afternoon burial services were held for the three-hundred and fifty-four who had paid with their lives. The second day after the attack seemed even sadder than the first, as the men began to realize the serious losses.

The 14th of May found the ship again in ULITHI ATOLL, just sixty-nine days after she had left — now a crippled veteran of the Battle for OKINAWA. Vice Admiral Mitscher and the staff of T.F. 58 left the ship immediately after the attack on 11 May to embark on the ENTERPRISE and the BUNKER HILL was destined to return to the States for a yard over-

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haul and repair job. After unloading certain supplies at ULITHI, the ship left in company with the Langley on 17 May for Pearl Harbor. Efforts were made to dispose of as much trash and debris as possible at this time. On 25 May the BUNKER HILL pulled into Pearl Harbor and moored at Ford Island -- where a band and a group of Waves greeted the ship. Women! So there were actually such creatures after all. The following three days were busy with further unloading of stores and the crew worked with high enthusiasm. Next stop would be the States and already stories were going around about leave, with perhaps as much as thirty days to be granted. On the 28th at noon the ship shoved off, set a course for Puget Sound and after six days of impatient waiting, the coastline of Washington appeared through the mist. The next morning CV-17 was steaming slowly around the bend in the channel leading to Puget Sound Navy Yard, Bremerton. The peaceful, quiet Sunday morning air, cabins along the shore with blue wood smoke rising from their chimneys and the cool, green pines made the fighting at OKINAWA seem far away.

There was only the great, gaping hole in the flight deck and the blackened hull to remind the crew and sightseers alike that the war had almost ended the career of the BUNKER HILL.

"Isn't it wonderful to be back in Uncle Sugar!" Everyone that wasn't saying it was thinking it. The men of the BUNKER HILL were back from the wars --- but only "for a while", they reminded themselves.

It wasn't long after the big ship nudged into drydock #5 on June 4th until that long-awaited liberty call ushered over the side droves of happy sailors. Bremerton was not "home", but at least each man could testify, "MOG-MOG was never like this!"

Soon most of the crew had been moved ashore into the receiving station barracks, the Navy yard workers and sundry other visitors had toured the ship to inspect the damage, and the yard had begun to turn to on the biggest repair job it had ever been confronted with. Day and night the monotonous staccato racket of air hammers relentlessly continued as slowly the BUNKER HILL's wounds were being bound up.

Before the first week had ended the not-too-secret concern of each member of ship's company manifested itself in the establishment of three 30-day leave parties. The first group left on June 8th, the last group returned August 24th. Coming as it did on the heels of disaster, this leave was doubly appreciated by all. In fact, several people liked it so well they took more than their thirty days.

During the summer the ship took advantage of the opportunity to send many of its officers and men to school for various types of training. Type schools attended included aircraft recognition, gunnery, fire control, O.O.D., radar, and fire fighting.

The ship remained in drydock until July 22, when she was moored alongside pier #3, berth #3. She remained there until the termination of the availability period, September 20.

During the three and one-half month period in the Navy yard, all the battle damage was repaired and many noteworthy physical changes and improvements were made.

One of the most significant improvements made in the Air department equipment was the installation of the new heavy duty arresting gear, which added about 110 tons of weight. The combat information center, while retaining in general its former physical arrangement as well as its hazardous gallery deck location, emerged from the Navy yard with decided improvements. Better fire control equipment and more guns were installed. Minor alterations were made in the 5" guns and in the 40MM mounts.

It was necessary, of course, to do much repair work on the ship's structure as a result of the two bomb hits and accompanying fire sustained in the action of May eleventh. Also there were design changes. In order to compensate for weight added various gear was replaced by lighter equipment where possible. In all, two hundred and ninety-one tons were added with two hundred and four tenths tons removed, the stability of the ship was not appreciably affected.

The ship had a month to go in the yard when VJ-Day came suddenly of 14 August. Four days later Captain George A. Seitz was detached and Captain Harold L. Meadow, U.S. Navy, assumed command of the BUNKER HILL. Soon many attentive minds were busily studying demobili-

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zation plans for the reserve personnel of the Navy. There were naturally many changes in the ship's company of the BUNKER HILL. The ship nevertheless proudly left the yard on 20 September and commenced trial runs and loading in Puget Sound. The full power run was outstandingly successful. On the 27th the BUNKER HILL put to sea once more, only this time with a load of soldiers during peacetime on a short run to San Francisco. On the 30th the ship was moored at the Alameda carrier pier anticipating a brief stop-over before shoving off on a quick trip to Pearl Harbor.

PART III - APPENDICES

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AIR GROUPS EMBARKED ON BUNKER HILL

AG	17	13 July 1943 to 4 March 1944	36 F4U 35 SB2C-1 19 TBF-1
VF	17	13 July 1943 to 27 September 1944	36 F4U
VF	18	27 September 1943 to 4 March 1944	36 F6F-3
AG	8	15 March 1944 to 27 October 1944	35 F6F-3 34 SB2C-1 18 TBF
VF(N)	76	15 March 1944 to 27 October 1944	4 F6F-3(N)
AG	4	4 November 1944 to 17 November 1944	36 F6F-3 35 SB2C-1 18 TBF
AG	84	24 January 1945 to 3 June 1945	61 F4U1D 6 F6F5(N) 15 SB2C4E 15 TBM3 6 F6F3(P)

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BUNKER HILL WAR RECORD

Enemy Planes shot down	470
Tonnage of enemy shipping sunk	162,375
Tonnage of enemy ships probably sunk	253,975
Tonnage of enemy ships damaged	454,075

The BUNKER HILL participated in every major invasion in the Pacific war from the Marshall and Gilbert Islands to Okinawa.

The BUNKER HILL was never out of operation due to mechanical failure or enemy action until hit by two Japanese suicide planes on 11 May 1945.

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FIRST COMMANDING OFFICER

The first Commanding Officer of the BUNKER HILL was Rear Admiral (then Captain) J. J. Ballentine, U. S. Navy. He is a product of the Middle West, having been born in Hillsboro, Ohio October 4, 1896. He began his professional career in 1914 when he entered the Naval Academy. Upon graduation in 1917 he served his first tour of duty aboard the battleship NEBRASKA acting as turret and signal officer. From battleships he went into aviation duty receiving training at N.A.S. Pensacola in seaplanes and land plane instruction at Carlstrom and Kelly Fields both of which were U. S. Army activities.

He conducted test work on the bomb sight now in use by the Air Forces, and was attached to the Naval Attache's Office in Tokyo in 1927 and 1928. His other duty assignments include:

Head of Ordnance Department, Office Material School, New York.

U.S.S. ARIZONA, Turret Officer.

Gunnery and Division Officer VT-1.

Officer-in-Charge VT-20, Asiatic Station.

Officer-in-Charge Naval Air Detail, Dahlgren, Virginia.

U.S.S. MARBLEHEAD C.O. VO-11-A.

U.S.S. SARATOGA C.O. VT-2.

Bureau of Aeronautics, War Plans.

Bureau of Aeronautics, Plans.

U.S.S. WRIGHT, Navigator.

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Staff, ComAirBaseFor, Operation Officer.

Staff, ComAirBatFor, Gunnery Officer.

Staff, ComAirBatFor, Operation Officer.

BuAer., Officer Detail.

BuAer., Head of Flight Division.

U.S.S. RANGER, Executive Officer.

U.S.S. LONG ISLAND, Commanding Officer.

ComCarLant, Chief of Staff.

SECOND COMMANDING OFFICER

The second Commanding Officer was Captain Thomas P. Jeter, U.S. Navy. Captain Jeter was born August 25, 1898 in Florence, Alabama. He entered the Naval Academy in 1915, graduating with one of the three year "War Classes" in 1918. His first tour of duty was on the destroyer JENKINS known as the "last of the flivvers". Upon completion of this duty he went to the battleship NEW YORK where he was the Spotting Officer in the Gunnery Department.

During his stay on the NEW YORK he became interested in aviation and applied for flight training. He received seaplane training at N.A.S., Pensacola and land plane training in San Diego. He served a tour of duty with the Bureau of Aeronautics in the Plans Division. Of particular interest is the fact that he was partially responsible for the development of the Curtis Helldiver.

Captain Jeter's varied professional career included duty with the following units:

VO-1 as Radio Officer.

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Army Air Corps Engineering School.

VF-6 on the Langley and SARATOGA as Executive Officer.

ComBatAirFor as Flag Lieutenant.

Board of Inspection and Survey.

VF-2 Commanding Officer.

ComBatAirFor, Operations Officer.

Naval War College.

Wright Field, Inspector of Naval Aircraft.

Argentine Naval War College, Advisor.

U.S.S. ENTERPRISE, Navigator and Executive Officer.

THIRD COMMANDING OFFICER

The third Commanding Officer of the ship was Captain Marshall R. Greer, U. S. Navy. Another native of the South, he was born near Boone, North Carolina March 1, 1896. The BUNKER HILL was Captain Greer's third sea command in World War II, the other two being the WRIGHT, an AVP, and the CORE, a CVE.

Captain Greer's Naval career was closely associated with that of his predecessor, Captain Thomas P. Jeter. Captain Greer relieved Captain Jeter as Naval Advisor at the Naval War College of the Argentine in Buenos Aires in 1939, they were members of the same Naval Academy class, graduating together in 1918, and both went through flight training together in 1921.

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In 1924 Captain Greer was a member of Torpedo Squadron TWENTY-ONE, the first Navy group in the Orient and the beginning of Aircraft Squadrons Asiatic. He served on the MEMPHIS, RALEIGH, LEXINGTON in scouting squadrons at NRAB Squantum, NAC Hampton Roads, and NAS, Norfolk. In addition, he was Inspector of Naval Aircraft at Wright Aeronautical Corporation, Commanding Officer of Cruiser Scouting Squadron SEVEN, Aviation Officer on the staff of Commander Cruisers, and a flight instructor at N.A.S. Pensacola.

FOURTH COMMANDING OFFICER

Captain George A. Seitz, U. S. Navy, reported aboard on January 24, 1945, relieving Captain Marshall R. Greer, U. S. Navy. He came to the ship after serving as Chief of Staff to ComAirlant, having held the temporary rank of Commodore.

He was born in Rochester, New York March 13, 1897. He entered the Naval Academy as a member of the class of 1920. In the days following World War I he realized the importance of the growing Naval Aviation service and entered Pensacola for flight training.

He rose slowly from Ensign up to his first command in 1935 as Commanding Officer of VF-1 on the LEXINGTON. In 1937 he transferred to Patrol activities and took command of VPB-8. In 1939 he took over the responsibility as Operation Officer on the Staff of Commander Aircraft Scouting Force and later ComAirlant.

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His next assignment was to the Bureau of Aeronautics in 1941.

In 1942 Captain Seitz took over Command of Fleet Air Wing Fifteen, in which capacity he saw service in North Africa and the Mediterranean theatre of war. He established the first Naval Air Station in Africa at Port Lyantey.

His skill and determination will be long remembered by the crew of the BUNKER HILL for his heroic actions on May 11, 1945, when the BUNKER HILL was forced to retire after receiving two Kamikazes on the flight deck.

FIFTH COMMANDING OFFICER

Captain Harold L. Meadow, U. S. Navy, direct from duty as Director of Aviation Personnel in Washington, D.C., assumed command of the U.S.S. BUNKER HILL on 18 August 1945 when he relieved Captain George A. Seitz, U. S. Navy. Captain Meadow brought to the BUNKER HILL experience based on a long career afloat with the Navy beginning immediately after his graduation from the United States Naval Academy with the Class of 1921.

The first seven years of the present Skipper's career were spent at sea and saw him serving on the battleship OKLAHOMA, the destroyers STEWART, MEREDITH, WILLIAM B. PRESTON, and BORIE, the battleship NEW MEXICO, and the cruiser CONCORD. This sea duty was followed by a recruiting assignment in Richmond, Virginia, and by flight training at Pensacola.

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He was then assigned to VS Squadron FIVE and served in that squadron on the cruisers MARBLEHEAD and MEMPHIS, after which Captain Meadow again went ashore for duty at N.A.S., Norfolk, Virginia. This was followed by duty as Flag Secretary on the staff of Commander Aircraft, Battle Force. He served as Executive Officer of VF-3, attached to the RANGER and as Commanding Officer of VB-2, attached to the old LEXINGTON.

On his next tour of shore duty at Pensacola, he served as Commander, Squadron ONE, as Commander, Aviation Cadet Battalion and as Aide to the Commandant.

Assignment to the ALBEMARLE, a seaplane tender, saw him serving as Navigator, Executive Officer, and Commanding Officer in that order. After a tour of duty in command of the Naval Air Station, Dallas, he returned to sea duty as Commanding Officer of the CVE BOLLINAS and later as Commanding Officer of the NATOMA BAY, another CVE. Following this duty he went back to Washington as Director of Aviation Personnel just prior to reporting to Puget Sound Navy Yard where he assumed command of the BUNKER HILL while the ship was in drydock there.

As Commanding Officer of the NATOMA BAY, Captain Meadow saw action in the MARSHALLS, the BISMARCK ISLANDS, and SAIPAN.

Georgia is listed as the Captain's native state and the place where he spent his youth.

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FIRST EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Commander C. E. Ekstrom, U. S. Navy, Executive Officer of the BUNKER HILL, from commissioning until December 1943, is another of the Naval officers who has spent almost his entire career in aviation. Leaving the United States Naval Academy with the Class of 1924 he put in two years duty with the battleship CALIFORNIA, then left sea duty to win his wings at Pensacola in December of 1926. He returned to the CALIFORNIA following training at Pensacola as a part of the ship's flight unit until 1929 when he was reassigned to the Naval Academy for post graduate study in Aeronautical Engineering. The following year he went to Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he was awarded a Master of Science degree in 1931.

After a year of service in the Naval Aircraft Factory in Philadelphia he joined VF-3 and went aboard the carrier Langley for duty with the Pacific fleet. This duty was broken by temporary duty with VF-5 aboard the old LEXINGTON before returning to his old squadron and ship.

Following a tour of duty with the Engine Section of the Bureau of Aeronautics ending in 1937, he was attached to VP-19 and went with the unit to Sitka, Alaska, as its Executive Officer in 1939. He left this unit after it had become VP-43 to become Commanding Officer of VCS-9 attached to the Light Cruiser Battle Force.

In 1941 Commander Ekstrom went to Naval Air Station, Corpus Christi, Texas, where he was in charge of a Patrol Training Squadron for one year.

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He later was made Assembly and Repair Officer, which post he held until assuming his duties as Executive Officer of the BUNKER HILL.

The Commander was born in Wisconsin, March 10, 1902. He entered the Naval Academy in 1920.

SECOND EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Ex-submariner and former Commanding Officer of a minesweeper as well as second Executive Officer of the BUNKER HILL, Commander C. A. Ferriter, U.S. Navy, is also a veteran of Japan's strike against Pearl Harbor and the Philippines. Fleeting up from First Lieutenant on board, Commander Ferriter was made Executive Officer in December 1943.

The Commander received his commission from the United States Naval Academy in 1924 and went aboard the cruiser OMAHA as Anti-Aircraft Gunnery Officer. He began his career as a submariner entering the school at New London, Connecticut in 1927. He served on the U.S.S. S-6 and later on the U.S.S. O-10. After a brief intermission as professor of Naval Science and Tactics at Yale University, he went to the U.S.S. BRIDGE and in 1935 to the U.S.S. CHANDLER as Executive Officer. This was followed by duty with the Hydrographic Office in Washington and, in 1938, as Gunnery Officer on the cruiser TRENTON.

It was as Commanding Officer of the minesweeper WHIPPOORWILL that he had his first combat duty. His ship was one of two minesweepers that survived the Japanese attack.

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The Commander earned the Navy Cross while in Philippine waters in rescuing the U.S.S. PEARY after it had been hit and set ablaze in Cavite Navy Yard. He next took his ship to the Java Sea where he saw further action with the American, British, and Dutch Fleets.

Although born in Trenton, Missouri, in 1901, Commander Ferriter claims Boone, Iowa as his home town.

THIRD EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Irish born Commander J. M. Carson came to the ship as Air Officer in January 1943 and became the ship's third Executive Officer approximately one year later. He is a graduate of the Naval Academy with the Class of 1925 and won his wings from Pensacola in 1928. His first shipboard assignment was on the battleships TEXAS and OKLAHOMA while he awaited the opportunity to start his flight training.

He joined VF-3 on the old LEXINGTON after leaving Pensacola, but came back to the States after eighteen months to the Primary Training and Experimental Section, Naval Air Base at Norfolk, Virginia. From Norfolk he returned to sea aboard the TEXAS as ship's aviator, later going to VS-1 aboard the RANGER in the Pacific. In 1936 he was sent to the flight tests section of the Naval Air Base in Anacostia and two years later was made Commanding Officer of the AVOGET. In 1940 he became Commanding Officer of VCS-5 aboard the cruiser NORTHAMPTON, returning in 1941 to Anacostia to become Commanding Officer of the Naval Reserve Aviation Base.

FOURTH EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Graduating from the office of Navigator, Commander W. B. Mechling, U.S. Navy, became Executive Officer of the BUNKER HILL in May 1944 to succeed Commander J. M. Carson.

Son of an Army Officer, Commander Mechling chose the United States Naval Academy and a naval career graduating with the Class of 1927, the same year his brother graduated from West Point. The first few years out of school saw him doing battleship and cruiser duty aboard the PENNSYLVANIA and the OKLAHOMA and the cruiser HOUSTON. His tour on the HOUSTON followed his graduation from Pensacola and saw him as one of the junior aviators with the Pacific Fleet. He was temporarily stationed with the seaplane tender JASON until that ship returned to the States in 1933 and the Commander stayed at Cavite with his squadron, VS-8A. Later in the same year he returned to join the LANGLEY.

Following a two year tour in Panama with a shore based patrol unit, he returned to the Academy to take a post graduate course, later going to California Tech for additional study in aeronautical engineering. After two years with VT-2 on the old LEXINGTON he was an instructor at Pensacola; from there he went to the Engineering Section in Washington. In January of 1943 he was sent to the BUNKER HILL as the ship's Navigator.

FIFTH EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Fifth Executive Officer and holder of that assignment when the ship was hit on 11 May, Commander Howell J. Dyson, U.S. Navy, brought

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to the ship his considerable experience with combat photographic reconnaissance units in the Pacific and with staff photographic assignments.

Immediately after completing his training at the Naval Academy in 1927 and the required amount of sea duty, he went to Pensacola and received the wings of a naval aviator. He served on the carrier SARATOGA in 1930 and 1932 as a member of VS-2. After that he was in succession, instructor at Pensacola (1932-1934), senior aviator on the OMAHA (1934-1936) VT-1 (1936-1937) VP-8 flying patrol boats (1937-1939), Commanding Officer of the seaplane tender PELICAN (1939-1941), and Commanding Officer VC-5 with Commander Cruiser Division FIVE in 1941.

When the war broke out Commander Dyson was Photographic Liaison Officer on ComFairWest Coast's Staff. In 1942 he was made Commanding Officer of the photographic squadron VD-1 and later of Fleet Air Photo Group ONE. This period found the Commander flying regular combat photo missions, especially during the Solomon campaign. In 1943 he was made Officer-in-Charge PRISIC (Photographic Reconnaissance and Interpretation Section of the Intelligence Center) with additional duty at Photographic Officer to Commander Air Force Pacific. For the last five months before assignment to the BUNKER HILL, he was Photographic Officer in the staff of Admiral Nimitz.

Honors won by the Commander while acting as one of the organizers and actual fliers in Naval photography include the Distinguished Flying Cross presented in January 1944 by Admiral Halsey. He was also

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presented with the Bronze Star by Captain Greer while serving on the BUNKER HILL for work previously done as Photographic Officer with CinCPac. The medal was presented in the name of Admiral Nimitz.

Commander Dyson was born in Louisiana, but now claims Coronado, California as his home.

SIXTH EXECUTIVE OFFICER

On 16 July 1945, Commander Bowen F. McLeod, U.S. Navy, reported aboard the BUNKER HILL to relieve Commander Howell J. Dyson, U.S. Navy. The new Executive Officer is from Mississippi and graduated from the Naval Academy in the class of 1930.

Upon receipt of his commission as Ensign in the Navy, he served on board the battleship NEW MEXICO, the light cruiser MILWAUKEE, and on the destroyers BORIE, LITCHFIELD, and DECATUR, in the order named. Following this tour of sea duty, he was ordered to NAS, Pensacola in June, 1934 receiving his wings as a Naval Aviator in August, 1935.

Commander McLeod began his flying career with a tour of duty as pilot in the aviation unit aboard the heavy cruiser, LOUISVILLE, lasting two years after which he was assigned to a year's duty in VB-2, a fighter-bombing squadron. In June, 1938, he was ordered to NAS, Pensacola for a period of shore duty during which he instructed in Squadron THREE at Chevalier Field for about one year, and later became War Plans Officer for the remaining year of his shore duty tour.

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Upon leaving NAS, Pensacola in June, 1940, Commander McLeod was ordered to report for duty with VP-12 which at that time was flying PBY-3 patrol seaplanes. After qualifying as Patrol Plane Commander in this squadron, he was ordered to duty in VP-13 in January, 1941. This squadron was engaged in testing PB2Y-2 aircraft and in training for the operational use of these four-engined seaplanes.

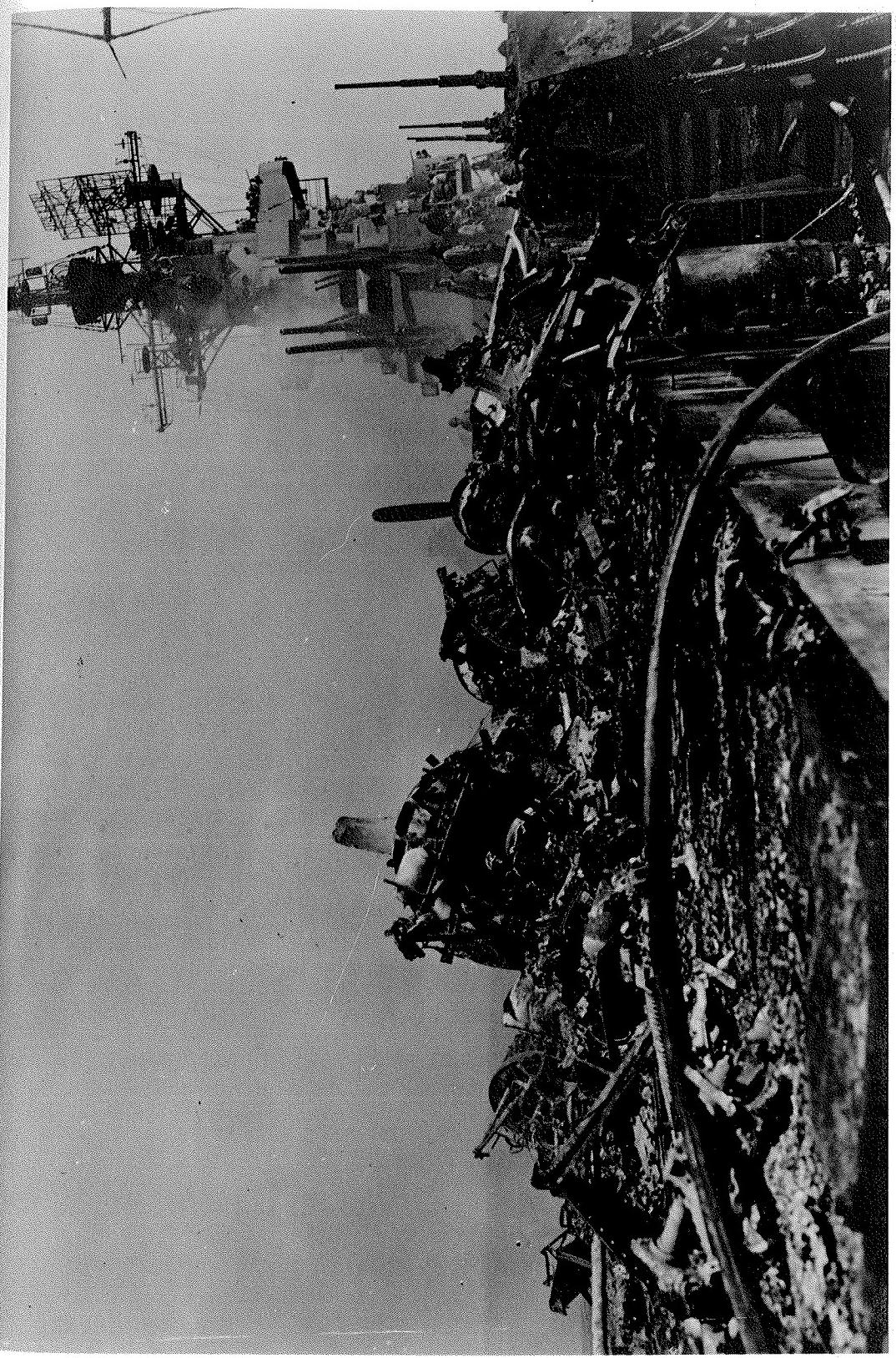
Shortly after the war began, he flew to Hawaii and commenced flying long-distance patrols and passenger flights throughout the Pacific area as a means of utilizing these large seaplanes to maximum advantage for the war effort. On 1 March 1943, he formed VPB-102 at NAS, San Diego, California, as Commanding Officer. He continued in this duty until 3 October 1943, when he was detached and ordered to duty as Operations Officer of Fleet Air Wing SIX at NAS, Whidbey Island, Washington. After twenty-one months of duty in Fleet Air Wing SIX, he was ordered to duty on the BUNKER HILL.

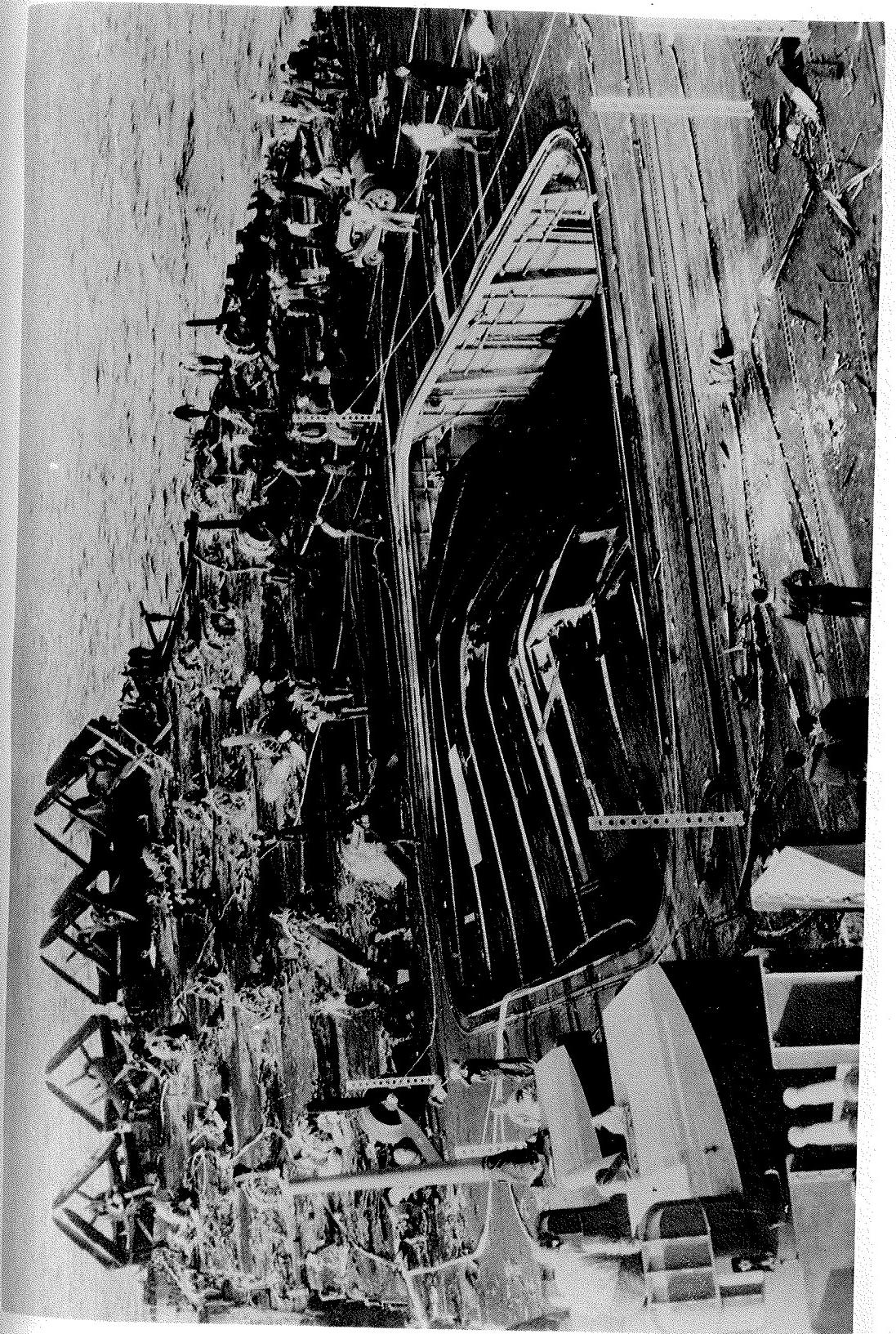
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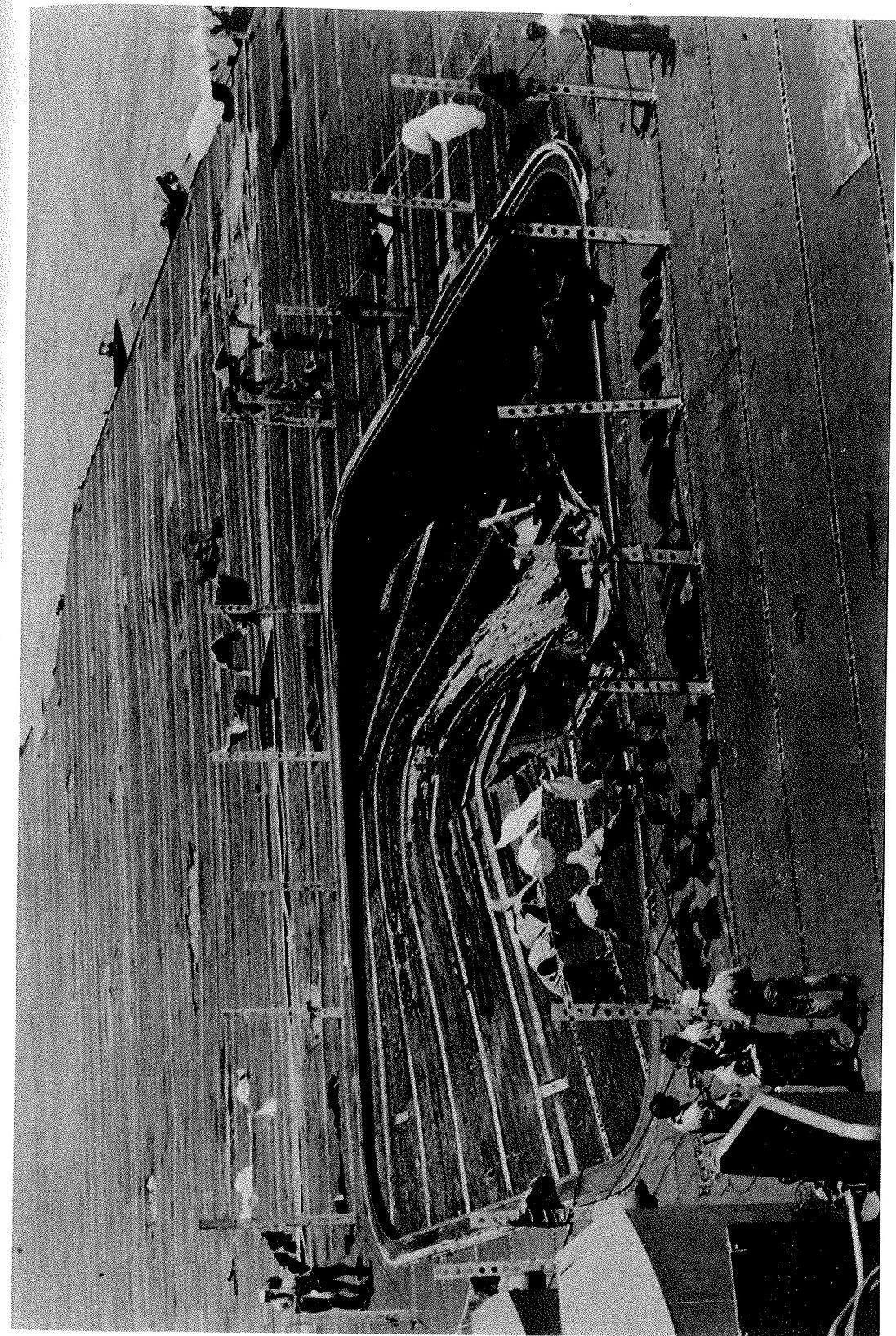
1. Ship's Log, USS BUNKER HILL CV 17
2. Air Plot Log
3. Combat Information Center Log
4. Combat Narratives - Gunnery Department
5. Action Reports - USS BUNKER HILL CV 17
6. THE MONUMENT - ship's newspaper
7. The BUNKER HILL yearbook
8. "Dive Bombing Squadron" by Robert Olds
9. "Battle Report - Pearl Harbor to Coral Sea" - Prepared from official sources by Commander Walter Karig, USNR, and Lieutenant Welbourn Kelley, USNR.

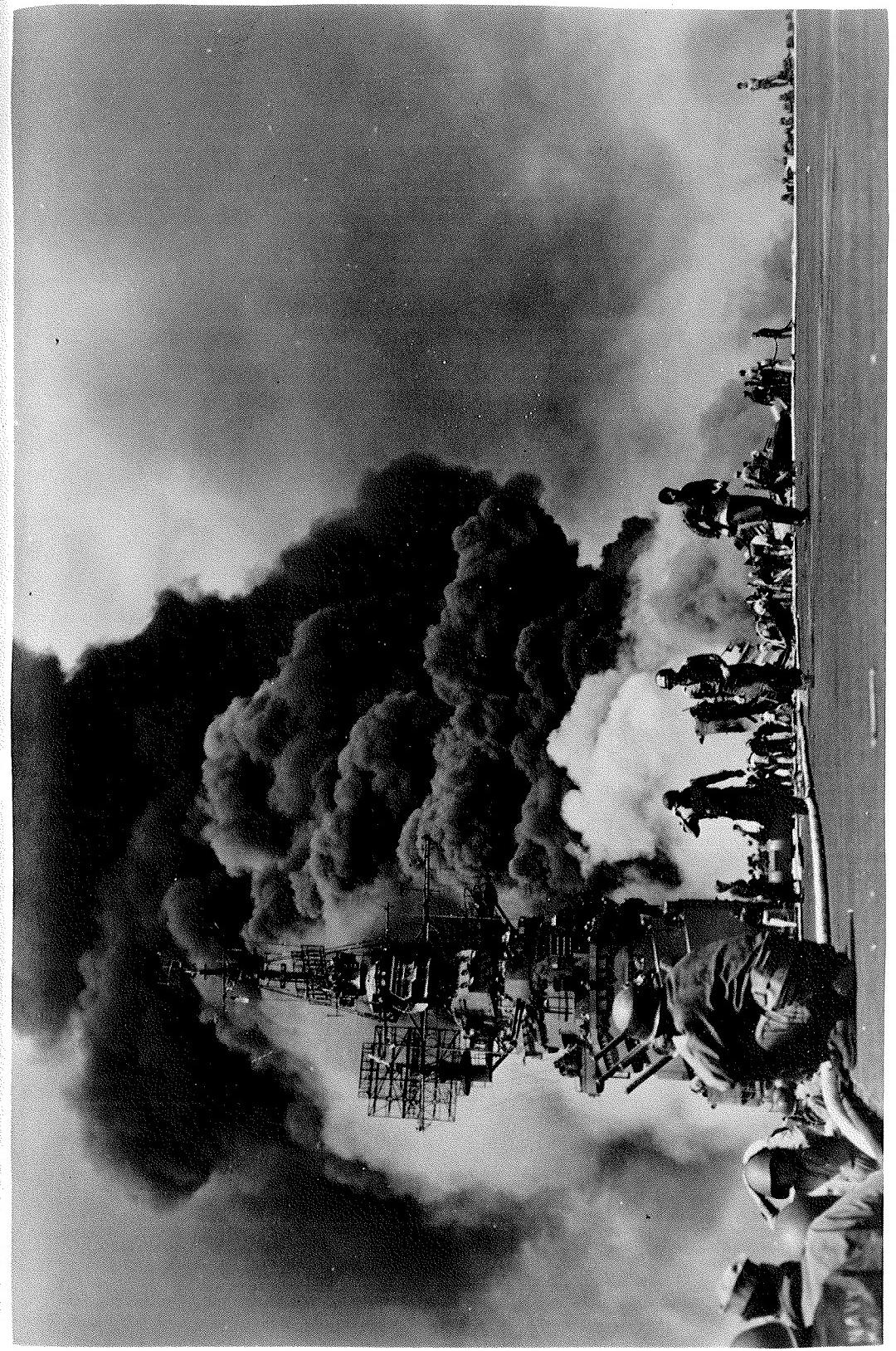
1. Flight deck from gun gallery looking forward.
2. Flight deck from Air Aft.
3. Flight deck from Air Aft following cleanup.
4. Flight deck looking aft from near number one elevator.
5. Flight deck showing second Kamikaze's path through signal bridge.
6. Number two elevator and bomb hole through flight deck - taken from primary fly.
7. Starboard quarter - 40 MM quad # 15 taken from deck of USS Wilkes Barre.
8. Hangar deck aft - number three elevator.
9. Hangar deck amidships (Frame 91) inboard of number two elevator, facing aft.
10. Hangar deck amidships showing bomb hit inboard of number two elevator.
11. Hangar deck at forward starboard crane - Vice Admiral Mitscher and staff leaving ship on afternoon of May 11.
12. Ready room number two - 02 deck.
13. 40 MM quad #15 damaged by USS Wilkes Barre (In background).

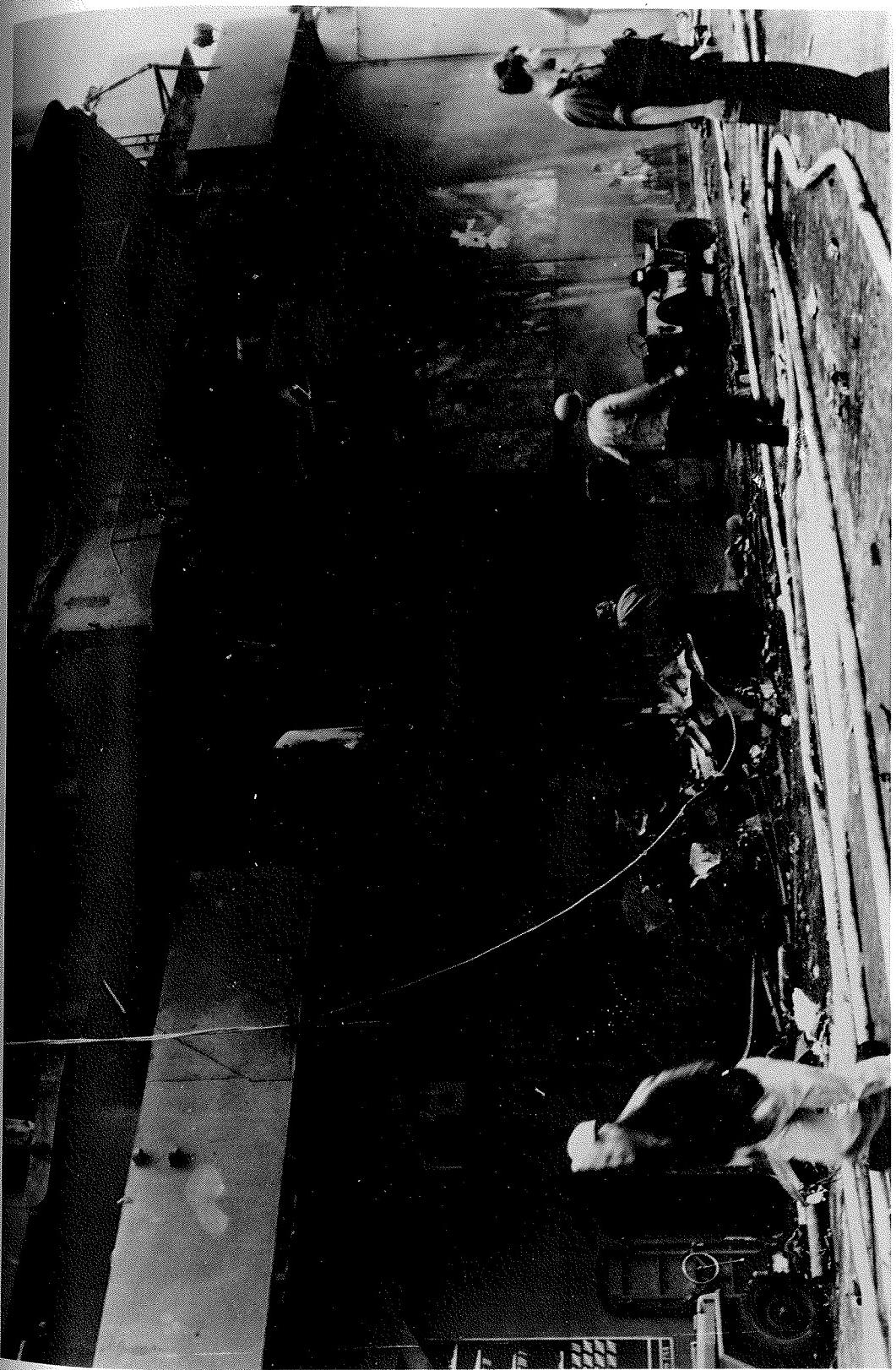




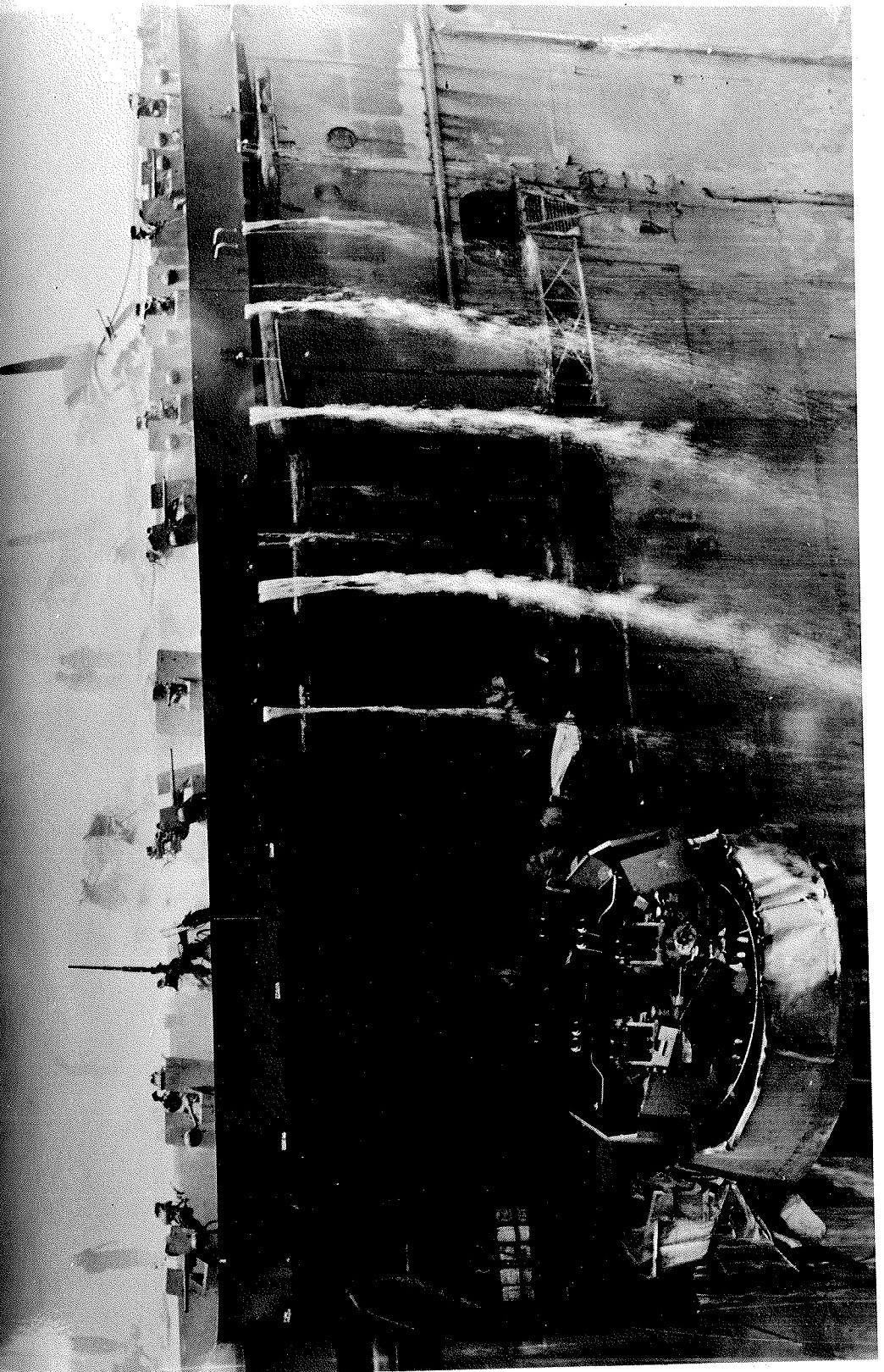
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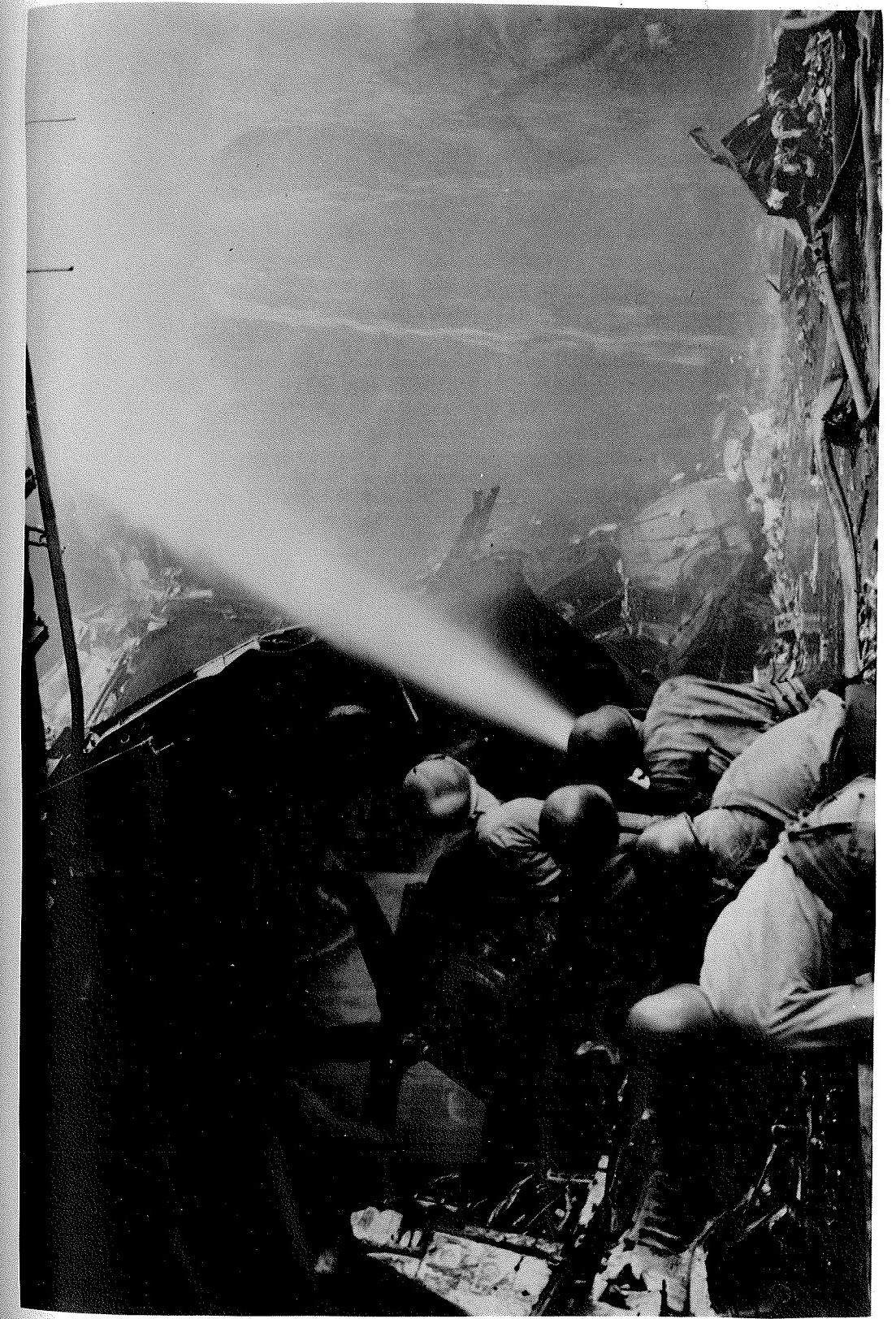




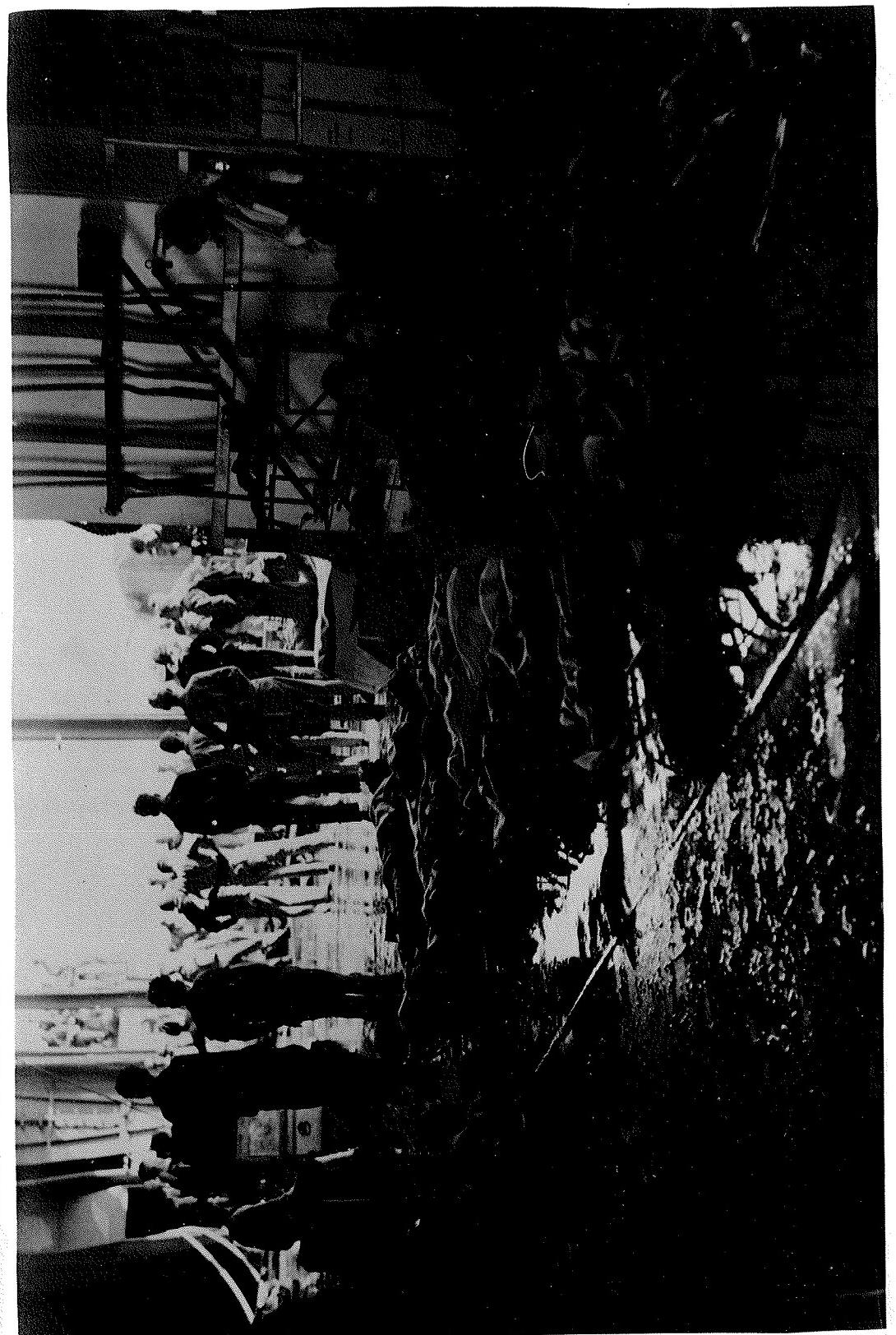
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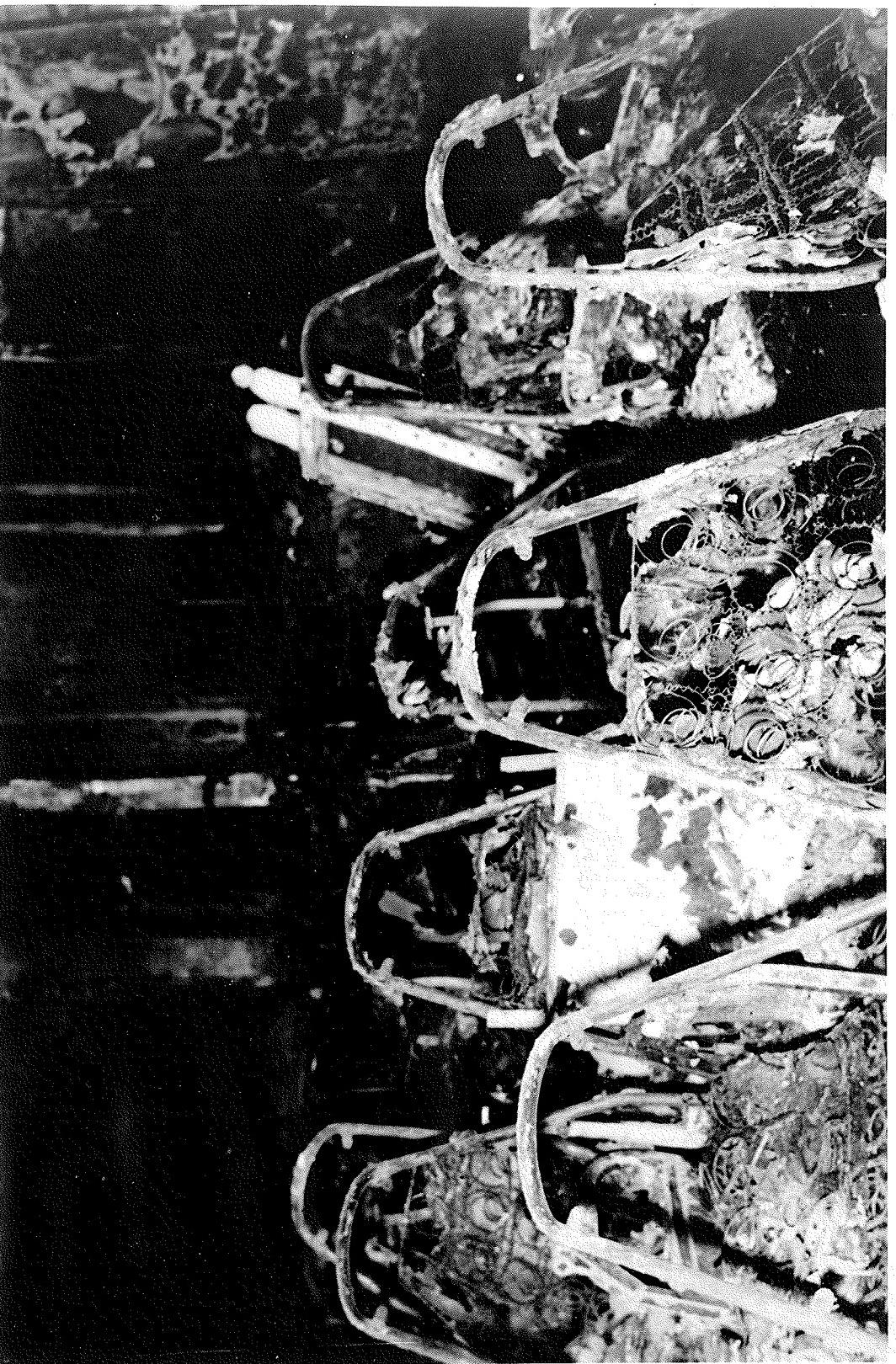


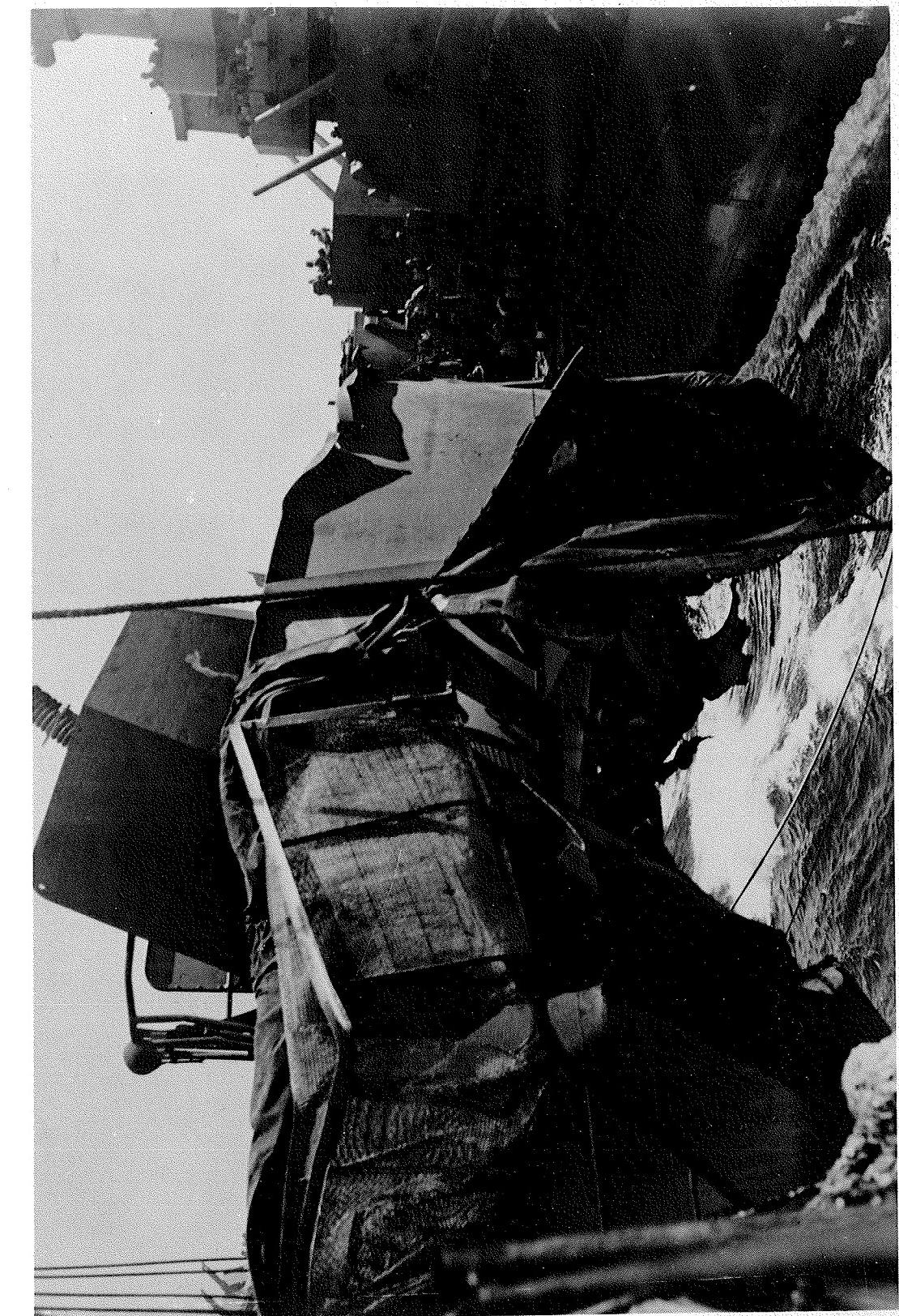
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